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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Helena
Hernmarck, 2010 July 28- August 31

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman
Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Helena Hernmarck on July 28 and August 31, 2010. The interview took place in Ridgefield, Conn., and was conducted by Matilda McQuaid 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.

Helena Hernmarck has reviewed the transcript. Her corrections and emendations appear below in brackets with initials. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

MATILDA MCQUAID: Um, the first question [laughs], I want to just kind of establish a chronology, so can you talk about where you were born, and also just discuss a little bit about your childhood, and how that became — how it influenced what you're doing today? That's a mouthful, but let's just begin there and we can go back and forth.

HELENA HERNMARCK: Yeah. Well, I was born in Stockholm, in April of 1941, with a war going on, but Sweden remained neutral through World War II. However, we — all the windows in the apartment were darkened every night so the city could not be seen from the air. I had four siblings, and I was more or less in the middle. The child number two who was born, died at the age of two of cancer. And so I was number three. So that I have two sisters and one brother, who is the youngest.

MS. MCQUAID: And they all came very fast, I mean, you had — aren't you all fairly close in age?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, my older sister was born '38, and my brother was born in '45. So yes, so my mother had a number of children in a short time.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

[Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: She was very young when she married my father. She was twenty-one, and he was thirty-four. She had studied to be a chef, but she hadn't practiced, and so she became a housewife during World War II. It was hard times, obviously, in many ways. She was supported by a very close family, she had two sisters, and her father, who was the head of a hospital. His name was Moritz Simon, they were Jewish on that side of the family. My father's family was living in Stockholm ever since 17 — um, about 1780.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: The name was taken in 1711, which means that many, many Swedish people who had names that ended with —son, s-o-n, as you know, started to invent names that separated them from all the other Andersons and Petersons. This is still going on to this day. And so my father's ancestor in 1711 was the first to go to university. And that's — he went to Uppsala, and that's when he put together Hernmarck.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh.

MS. HERNMARCK: *Hern* indicates the county or the *sveriges län, landskap*, that he came from. Sweden had 25 landskaps.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. Are they considered counties?

MS. HERNMARCK: Counties, yeah, yeah, they are counties. And Marck, of course, is very typical, as you have heard many names in America, like Stromberg and Alquist and Lindberg. All those things mean names of trees and streams and mountains, and it's all nature. It's a combination. My father came from a well-to-do family, although his father lost his fortune in 1909 or thereabouts. His mother's side were industrialists in the paper and pulp business, one of the big companies. So, um — and his grandmother, I should really mean his paternal grandmother, that's where the wealth came from.

So he studied at Uppsala University, my father, and he was there for a long time, he couldn't decide what to do, and eventually he ended up being an art historian. And he, then, later on became — worked with the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm in the field of decorative arts all his life. And he was the foremost expert on European silver. That was ultimately his — what he was mostly known for. So we had the museum world on my father's side, and on my mother's side, my mother's sister Ka had married Sven Markelius, the architect, who is

fairly well-known here in the States too. He was what was called a Functionalist architect.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: He did two jobs in the U.S. He was invited to do one of the rooms at the U.N. The Scandinavian countries each gave a big room, so the room Sweden gave is the room where they discuss economic and social questions. And he designed that room, and in that room on the big wall against the East River, hung a fantastic, large tapestry, two thousand square feet, designed by one of my teachers. [Marianne Richter, *Night Curtain*.]

MS. MCQUAID: Wow! 2,000 square feet!

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. And that was done in 1952, and it was woven at a firm which is somewhat known here, called Märta-Määs-Fjetterström. Both my grandmothers had done weaving, particularly my maternal grandmother, who came from the island of Gotland. She actually went to the same school I did [Tekniska Skolan, now University College of Arts, Crafts and Design].

MS. MCQUAID: Huh.

MS. HERNMARCK: And enrolled in 1900 and she actually, in the end, got a job at the bank because her handwriting was so exquisite. But she always made carpets and curtains and so on for their homes.

MS. MCQUAID: And was she alive during your childhood?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, she was, but she had pretty much stopped weaving. I didn't ever see her weave. I saw my aunt Ka weave. She had a loom, too. And her — Sven Markelius's daughter from his first marriage, was a student at the art school before me, and she had the same teachers as I did. Marianne Richter, who did the curtain at the U.N. building, always said that Anita Markelius was one of her most talented students. She didn't, in the end, pursue a textile career. So — but I was — being in the middle, I suppose, I was squeezed between my older sister, who was of course important, then my younger sister, who was much brighter than me in school, so I had a hard time dealing with her grades always being better than mine. But my father encouraged me entirely to become a textile designer, as it was called then,

MS. MCQUAID: Being in the decorative arts, I mean, that seems like a natural thing for him to —

MS. HERNMARCK: And then to work with architects, which of course I pursued then in my whole career. So I was very much stamped by my childhood.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. And what about — talk a little bit about your schooling, because I know that there was a — in your book, *Helena Hernmarck: Tapestry Artist* [Hernmarck, Helena, et al. Stockholm: Byggforlaget; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999], you talk about your father took you on a visit to —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, I think almost all parents start to think in those lines when their kids are teenagers. You know, they have to be exposed to what goes on in the world, so they can hopefully pick something that suits, that — you know, we should all do something we love, essentially. I mean, that's a luxury, but it is a very good goal in every way, because you do it for the rest of your life.

MS. MCQUAID: Exactly.

MS. HERNMARCK: And if you only pursue money, for example, I don't think you are as happy.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: So, of course, Swedish textile art was experiencing a real renaissance in the mid-twentieth century. I even to this day can think of thirty great artists, without much trouble, who worked in this medium, and it was a perfectly acceptable art form. Nobody thought it was unworthy or anything. It filled a function in our modern architecture, which one can see from Gunta Stözl and Anni Albers, too. Actually, the whole — our, our — what I am trying to say — the Arts and Craft movement, of course.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. I mean, do you think the Bauhaus sort of helped to kind of make —

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh, definitely.

MS. MCQUAID: I can't remember offhand if there were a lot of Swedish designers —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, the Swedes and the Scandinavians did something very interesting, because first of all they were inspired by William Morris. But William Morris was totally against industry, whereas the Scandinavian countries decided that no, no, we're going to put artists to design for industry, which was what the Bauhaus also

did.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it was a kind of parallel thing. And then of course the Bauhaus had a very big following in Sweden.

MS. MCQUAID: Except for the Bauhaus it really only worked with the weaving workshop, in terms of the industrial aspect of it, because the others, you know —

MS. HERNMARCK: You're right.

MS. MCQUAID: It's like that was — I feel like the weaving workshop was their biggest success, in many ways.

MS. HERNMARCK: And she was forced to — I mean, the weavers pulled in the money for the whole school.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it was unfair that they were always treated like second-class citizens, which of course they were.

MS. MCQUAID: I know.

MS. HERNMARCK: But, and in Sweden, it was particularly one textile designer by the name of Elsa Gullberg who started out working with industry. She was the first. And unfortunately the Swedish Museum of Modern Art sent a show to America, which they also showed in Sweden, of course, called "Swedish Design for 100 Years." The show was at the Bard in New York some years ago. ["Utopia and Reality: Modernity in Sweden, 1900-1960," March 14-June 16, 2002.] And they just left out textile art. They left it out. There were like three pieces.

MS. MCQUAID: I remember. I remember, actually, that at Bard.

MS. HERNMARCK: I was so furious. And then instead, because they took out of their own collections, they sent painters like Sigrid Hjertén and Isaac Grünewald, they sent their paintings, instead of examples of textiles. But the painters had nothing to do with designing for industry.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Of course glass benefited, usually, and ceramics, and silver, they all benefited. But it started with the textile artists. Of course textiles are needed, everywhere, all the time.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. No, absolutely. I mean, we're — would you say it was very much about — industry was important to the development of textiles during the '50s. What companies were especially well-known during that time?

MS. HERNMARCK: Um, Almedahls, Kasthall— I don't know since I never did industrial work myself, but all my teachers taught textile art both as art and for industry. Alice Lund did, Edna Martin did.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: That generation did. When I came along, Edna's approach for our future survival was that we should focus on doing it as art, because of course it was the only — in the '60s, by the time the '60s rolled around, it was the only area where you could earn enough money to spend that time.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So — and she then, maybe one might criticize her, but her way into that field on behalf of her textile students was to take — go to famous painters that she knew and suggest — and look herself through their art and decide what would be appropriate to translate to textiles.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: Because she had to land the jobs by using a name. And so she built this interest in public textile art, large-scale. And she had a few real originals, like Sten Kauppi, he was a textile designer, but mostly it was work by well-known painters, and she then picked what was right. And they were splendid textiles.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Then at the same time she was training — because she was doing two things, she was teaching at the Konstfackskolan, at my school, and she was also running Handarbetets Vänner, which was a big atelier that produced this large work. So that's how she then thought that she would help us into a world. She would sort of pave the way for these big jobs. And of course I benefited from that.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: From the start. Now it's sort of faded. And of course it was the Swedish State Commission for the Arts who then bought it, and put it in all these public buildings. Eventually after about twenty-five years of this, the rotating board — the people — the jurors who picked the art eventually got bored with the textiles and moved into other fields.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: And so the worst thing about this history was that A) the installations were never photographed when they were new — there was no money to photograph; and B) there was no money for maintenance. They gave each — like the Department of Industry, and the Department of Taxation and so on, they were all given this art.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because the employees were supposed to have art in their daily —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: But the companies didn't choose it, so they didn't feel much for it.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: They had not themselves been involved, they were just told, here, this is yours.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: More or less. I mean, together with the architects — but, it's interesting. The worst is that they didn't photograph it. So now it's floating around, half of it is lost.

MS. MCQUAID: That's really too bad.

MS. HERNMARCK: They've started to — they've started to feel that it's important to rescue what they can find, but it's still rather half-hearted.

MS. MCQUAID: And was any of your work part of that? Or was that —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, but mine —

MS. MCQUAID: — or work that you were involved with at the time?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, you know, I left Sweden so quickly that I only had time —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Even — I wove it in Canada, the one for the Sweden House, the *Newspapers* [1968].

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And that one, the laws helped me rescue that, because the artist who has done such a job still has a say in its handling. So it had belonged to this building, the Sweden House, and then the Foreign Office part of that had moved to another location where it didn't fit. And then it had traveled in many exhibitions —

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh.

MS. HERNMARCK: And finally I got to see it hanging in the Nordic Museum in Stockholm in a show called "Time," it was about *Times*, the newspapers?

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh.

MS. HERNMARCK: It was picked to be in their show, Well, they'd hung it up in such a bad way that I then protested, and I said, "It's time it's given to the Nationalmuseum."

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it was. Because I said so.

MS. MCQUAID: Good!

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. But there it's lying on the shelf, I mean they hardly ever hang it up, because it's too big. And that's the other problem. It's both good and bad. It takes a lot, it's glorious —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: But it's big! But it needs a wall. And in a museum, there's always a shortage, they'd rather hang up something small in order to hang up more things.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So there's very little use for these big, big works, very little. Even though they don't take any room to store — you roll them up.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right, exactly.

MS. HERNMARCK: They still don't get used.

MS. MCQUAID: I know.

MS. HERNMARCK: But there's a body of work there which I for years thought of — even before Tom [Thomas P. Campbell] became the head of the Met, I talked to him about it, said, "Look, Sweden can achieve the most incredible textile exhibition here that you can imagine if they would only start saving, collecting, and finding where it is, and you know, spend some money on making it presentable."

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: But I haven't — you know, I've talked to people about it for years, but all those things mean that you yourself have to do it.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

[Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: No, it sounds — I mean — all of these large pieces, are they all in the tapestry tradition? Or are they —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, no, I mean, here's another thing, the terminology in English — it's very confusing, because it's not all the Gobelins technique.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because — we in Scandinavia call it tapestry because there's something called the *Bayeux Tapestry*.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's a textile that hangs on the wall. That's the loosest possible — Because the *Bayeux Tapestry* is embroidered, after all.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So, then, since these organizations who are working on the terminology in the textile world have suddenly decided in the English-speaking world to call it only the Gobelins technique, it's only — I've fought this, too. I think it's not correct. I mean, they've usurped the word.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: People who just weave Gobelins, now lay claim to the word tapestry.

MS. MCQUAID: That's tapestry.

MS. HERNMARCK: Which is not right, in my book. But I mean, who am I?

[Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: No, no, but I think these kinds of clarifications — because I think later on I'd like to kind of talk about some of those, the terminology —

MS. HERNMARCK: The good thing is the Swedish textiles that were made in the mid-twentieth century are not at all all Gobelins. Some of them are. But people have used other techniques.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it's still fantastic textile art.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: They've been freer about it, in fact they've been more inventive.

MS. MCQUAID: So — well, tell me a little bit about your studies, because I know — you know, in terms of what you actually — in your kind of younger years, and then later on, what sort of courses you took, and what was especially inspirational or influential.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, I should add here that at the age of 14 I moved to England, because my mother had married there. And so then for three years I went to an English girls' school, which I loved. And which had an art teacher, but I didn't like her very much, so I never paid any attention to that. So for a while there I thought I was going to be a journalist, which my mother was. [Laughs.] But I took O-levels, which is not —

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's the first grade. And then at 17 I moved back to Sweden to learn weaving, because at that point I decided that Swedish teaching of textiles was above what was going on in England at the Royal College of Art. I mean, I knew what they were doing, too, but in fact the Scandinavian modern design was much more advanced than the English. Later on I discovered a fantastic English weaver called Ethel Mairet and her life, but she was more in the Arts and Crafts movement, she was a generation before me. But she did some beautiful work, but I never met her or saw her there.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: However my father that took me instead to visit with Alice Lund, which is three and a half hours northwest of Stockholm. And Alice at the time — Alice was born in 1900, and when she was 65, she sold the business, in 1965. So I had time to be an apprentice there for two summers, in '60 and '61, with her still being there. Then she had her son who was an architect build a house at the bottom of the garden, so that she lived for a few more years nearby and helped be the artistic leader of the firm.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: But she had sold it to an engineer — textile engineer, whom she had worked with in industry. His name was Sven Johansson. And he then ran it for 20 years, after his pension. So he had it 'til he was over 80.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: My first commission that I farmed out was when he was running it.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative].

MS. HERNMARCK: So 1975 was the first big job I gave them.

MS. MCQUAID: And so what did you learn from Alice Lund? What kind of —

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh, she had — she was called "the lyrical functionalist" —

MS. MCQUAID: "The lyrical functionalist," that's great.

MS. HERNMARCK: — by one art critic. She did — she was still working when the labor was very cheap. So they made hand-woven upholstery fabric, curtain fabric, for things like luxury ships, theaters, they did theater curtains — huge things! They did lots of carpets for embassies. They would help decorate — in fact, the Swedish embassy in China that was finished in the '60s was decorated with her textiles. So she had 25 weavers there, when I first went there. And five people in the office. It was incredible.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: And they were producing all this wonderful stuff. And to jump to the present, this is extraordinary. Last time I gave a talk in Sweden, when I was giving my class, I was talking about what I'm telling you about these tapestries need to be found —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — and collected and taken care of, and I'm saying I wish there was one now who was like Lilli Zickerman. Now, Lilli Zickerman was a Swedish woman born in the nineteenth century who went looking for rya rugs, rya carpets, in Swedish farmhouses about from 1910, '20, and she had a camera, and she photographed 24,000 of them that she found.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my Lord.

MS. HERNMARCK: And they're beautiful things. And then her brothers hand-colored them. So she — only one of her books was published, but one book is done. So she was then a mentor of the *hemslöjd*, the Swedish home cottage, home craft cottage-industry, which became very, very big. So she was the kind of person who went out and looked for things, and saved them. So I was referring to her and I said, "I wish someone nowadays would do this," and there was a young girl sitting there, "I will! I will!" What! What are you saying?

[Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: She had actually taken my class. But she was — her name is Frida Lindberg, and she has just gotten her master's degree from Uppsala University in textile science. And she needed something to write an essay about. So she wrote about Alice Lund. [Alice Lund Textilier AB is the full name of the firm -HH]

MS. MCQUAID: Huh.

MS. HERNMARCK: This last winter, 45 pages, her essay. She [Frida Lindberg -HH] went through all the boxes with all the samples and planned it. Her production was from the '30s to the '60s. But even found a 101-year-old woman who had worked for her and who had remembered eight years she worked for her in the '30s and '40s.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: So she could interview her. This gives me —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's —

MS. HERNMARCK: — my Alice back, I'm so happy. And Frida has now been hired by the firm to go back and reconnect with the church. A lot of the stuff was made for churches.

MS. MCQUAID: For churches?

MS. HERNMARCK: And there's in Sweden to this day a lot of money spent every year on textiles for the church. Beautiful, fantastic, well-made things. I have a book about the silks that were woven in Venice for, um — there's — he was called Bevilacqua. I went there in 1993 and I saw it.

MS. MCQUAID: Mm-hmm.

MS. HERNMARCK: On Canal Grande. And this man's mother had been Swedish, and they had the production of silk damask. And Sofia Widén was a partner of Alice Lund, was down there designing in the '50s, and he pulled out drawers, and there were her samples, still lying there.

MS. MCQUAID: Mm-hmm.

MS. HERNMARCK: And they sent — 40 percent of their production went to Sweden in the '40s and the '50s.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: To the court and to the church.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow. It's incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: Interesting stuff. And a book has just been published about that, too.

MS. MCQUAID: So is the — is it easier to find, I mean in terms of the church, if they have textiles, is it — do they document, do they still document kind of what they've ordered, what they have? I mean, is it easier to find

than say some of the other kind of ones that are in more public places?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, yes. In many ways, yes. Alice Lund have all these records. They have books where everything was written, who they sent to and what — and that is what Frida is now picking up on.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: She's going to develop that side. They haven't had any marketing done for 40 years. So, you know, it's all sitting there. It's like a treasure.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And the young guy, the son of the owner, has decided with a partner that they're going to invest in it, and bring it up again.

MS. MCQUAID: That's fantastic.

MS. HERNMARCK: I'm so excited, I could die!

[Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Because for so many years, it was just, "Oh, they're probably going to go under next year."

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: It was always that. And now they've even hired another girl to be a weaver. She wants to weave. She wants to learn to weave, and I have another job that I can give, so it's -

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: It's very exciting.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's great.

MS. HERNMARCK: [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: So then for those two years, you were a weaver with her? Did you — I mean —

MS. HERNMARCK: [Here, I get back to talking about my apprenticeship with Alice Lund -HH] No, no, it was only the summer. But then — it was only during the summer vacation of 1961 and 1962.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: But yes. My first job was to make a warp that was 36 meters long, I'll never forget it.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow!

MS. HERNMARCK: I sat in the back room warping, up up up up up, down like —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh my God.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then when the warp was done, they'd, "Okay, now weave it."

[Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: It was some kind of curtain fabric.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So I did. No, no, you have to — Practice makes perfect. There's so much that has not, in modern teaching, been paid attention to, how important skills are.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: They've just vanished, skills.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean in terms of schools now, of — where they — where textile — where, you know, they have textile departments, like RISD [Rhode Island School of Design] and, well, Cranbrook, do they have enough of that, do you feel? I mean, based on kind of your, you know, your own sort of background? In terms of developing

those kinds of skills? Do you think it's — is there — is it too free form, do you think? Was there —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, I think — Of course RISD's much better off because they are geared towards industry. So they really learn their techniques.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: You know, there you learn it. Even though it's for mass production, you learn a lot.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: At Cranbrook, it's all free form, free art, you don't learn anything, I don't think. The looms are just tucked away in a corner.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: And have been for longer. Because, you can understand, it was in a way my attitude too, it has to be art if you want to earn from it. But even — in America, it was never considered possible to earn a living from crafts. Not for a long, long time.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: We didn't have that attitude in Scandinavia. We said of course you can earn a living, you just have to be good at it. So when I came over here, it was kind of funny, I sort of had the U.S. to myself.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: You know, really it was weird. And the architects were saying, I, you know, knocked on all these doors, and the architects were saying "What? You're young? You want to weave? Sure!"

[Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: And they all expected me to be Anni Albers, this age. But of course I was 25, wearing a mini-skirt.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: They sort of fell over backwards.

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So it was fun. It was interesting. Because of course, I was — I mean, timing is everything. I had no — the market in Sweden was pretty saturated, obviously, with all these people doing it.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: But I came over here, and the architects, who then were running these offices, were all admirers of Scandinavian design.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, that was popular, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because of their timing, that's what they had admired when they were students. So everybody wanted to see me. And you know, in those days people had time. We don't even realize what changes have happened in offices.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: But Skidmore, Owings & Merrill was an architectural firm in San Francisco, huge office, probably a hundred employees, when I once showed my slides, everybody came and looked in the boardroom. They just, you know —

MS. MCQUAID: Dropped everything — it wasn't the —

MS. HERNMARCK: The pressure.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. And there is another explanation, why it sort of dried up a lot, from the architectural

connections. Which I like to point out because nobody thinks of it, that everything went very up and up and up until early '90s, '92 it went sort of, crashed, for me. And what happened was that these corporate clients had started to look at the bottom line, and they hired the name architects not to do the whole building anymore.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: They hired them for the face and the lobby and the roof kind of thing. And they gave all those floors in between, 50 floors, to a cheaper outfit.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, the reason that these early architects had bought my work was that they could change the door handle on 50 floors, and get the money for the tapestry.

MS. MCQUAID: Interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then when that was taken away, then they didn't have the budgets anymore.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And another important thing now, when you think about it, is that everybody looks at their quarterly reports.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: They don't want to buy anything that goes past one quarter.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And to commit to something that takes longer, I mean, obviously a building takes longer, but to buy art that way, they just think it's a bother, I think.

MS. MCQUAID: Unless you have a developer who is — or the owner of the building, that wants to build up their collection.

MS. HERNMARCK: That's right.

MS. MCQUAID: And sort of buys it or commissions it as part of their kind of larger collection, art collection.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So to go back to my training, a project we would be given at Konstfackskolan with Edna Martin — cause we had her only the last two years, so first two years we were essentially learning more techniques, and the last two years we got more like, suppose somebody's going to open a hotel, design all textiles, everything from the towels, the bedspreads, the curtains, the carpets, and the art. See? It would be a complete thing.

MS. MCQUAID: Everything.

MS. HERNMARCK: That's like how Frank Lloyd Wright approached it, it's all of —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: And Scandinavia did not have a cadre of interior decorators. They did not exist. So they would hire an architect and a textile designer, and they would create the building. So that's totally different, also, that you buy sort of a more complete thing.

MS. MCQUAID: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that made a huge difference. 'Cause privately — there's a very small market for private, because being Sweden you paid so much in taxes —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: It was really the government that had the money to support art. And they did for many years, but now they've stopped.

MS. MCQUAID: So Edna Martin, she was your teacher?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes. She was — she had started her career within the Hemslöjd, so she had designed carpets

and things.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: And then she worked with children, she taught embroidery for little kids, she wanted to pass on the interest in textiles. She started with embroidery, which of course is natural. And then she was hired in 1951 — she was born in 1908, so she was like 43 — to run Handarbetets Vänner which was a much bigger atelier than Alice Lund. Maybe they didn't have more staff in the office but they also had a school. And they also for a while owned a separate school out in the country which still — where I taught recently, which now belongs to the Hemslöjd again. It was started by two sisters and then it belonged to Handarbetets Vänner and then it belonged to the Hemslöjd and where they teach crafts. It's called Sätergläntan.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: And they give courses. Both you can learn weaving — that's the only place you can go now in Sweden to learn techniques for two or three years, you know, they have —

MS. MCQUAID: That's what I was going to ask you, how long —

MS. HERNMARCK: Sewing — sewing clothes, embroidery, and weaving. Three different textiles.

MS. MCQUAID: And you learn all of them?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah! And it's very, very —

MS. MCQUAID: Well, there's nothing like that here in the States. It's interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: No, no. Here the workshops are all in the summer.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's summer workshops, two, three weeks.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, but not the intensive —

MS. HERNMARCK: I don't know where you could go for two, three years and really get to learn —

MS. MCQUAID: No.

MS. HERNMARCK: The clothes they make [at Sätergläntan in Sweden -HH] are to die for, every seam, you know, even sometimes —

MS. MCQUAID: No, I mean, here they get parsed out. I mean, you'd have FIT [Fashion Institute of Technology], where you could, you know, kind of maybe focus on sewing to a certain extent, but —

MS. HERNMARCK: But it's a tiny school.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's like ten - if they have a class of ten, that's a lot. They have three, maybe five.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then they also take in the short courses. So they rotate. They can have 80 people, I think, now. Haystack can have 80. I think Sätergläntan can have a few more. But there's some areas that Sätergläntan doesn't do. They don't do glass there, because they don't have the glass facility. They do wood and textile. Wood, textile, and some iron forgery. Yeah. But it's a great place.

MS. MCQUAID: And so you've taught there, but did you —

MS. HERNMARCK: I didn't study there because I got it all at — first I went to Handarbetets Vänner for six months to get a very thorough basic — in basic weaving.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: That's when we did the tablecloths, where we dyed the linen with pine needles, and then wove

goose eye napkins and tablecloths. Just going through all the techniques. And I would have — I would show you the book, but I've already given it away to the University of Minnesota.

[Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Because I finally thought, I've got this treasure, and my history's interesting. I've got a lot of [stuff -HH], I better start giving it away sooner rather than later in case something happens.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. But with Alice Lund, I mean, kind of going back to your first — I mean how you first got inspired in weaving, I mean, it was through a visit to her, but what was it about, kind of, the weaving —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, what it was —

MS. MCQUAID: What you saw there, or the process, or was it the colors, was it sort of the —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, let me see. Well it was, here, this is what it looked like. It was the camaraderie, it was — She lived on the top — this floor.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: The studio, the workshop was on this floor —

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: And there were some guest rooms up here. It was just — and then she had Sofia Widén as a partner friend, who lived in a separate little building. But it was just the whole, all-together atmosphere.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Like a community

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, like a commune, in a way.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: And the weavers, of course, had been there most of their lives, most of them. She'd picked them up as little farm girls. And then the people in the office were a little better educated. One woman who was kind of the foreman, who was a hoot, whose father was a bishop, and she was very great. And just the way it all —

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: And then Alice knew all the architects. Her husband had been an architect and her son was an architect and she was well-connected in Stockholm.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And she got all the — she got involved in all the best new building projects.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it was really high class and she was in exhibitions all the time.

MS. MCQUAID: And how did your father know her?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well he, of course, being the head of decorative arts, you know, he collected both modern, old and modern. Modern wasn't exactly his field but he had shows. And after I'd been there, the following summer, I think, they had a show at the museum which I was allowed to be there and help hang it.

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: And I was totally happy.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Did he collect any of her work? Did he have any —

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh, sure. Oh, yes.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, in your house, did you have any of her —

MS. HERNMARCK: No, our home was all antiques. And people didn't collect. Except the ceramics here.

MS. MCQUAID: Beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: Some of these are from my father's house. Like these ones. And this, they had —

[Audio break.]

MS. HERNMARCK: It was mostly — I saw Alice's home and Edna's homes. I mean, they were the kind —

MS. MCQUAID: Just filled with — brimming with all different types — activity?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, they never brimmed because there was always restraint. So it — nothing was overdone. But Astrid Sampe, of course, who was the most famous international textile designer, who did more production stuff, her home was incredible in a top apartment in Karlaplan. So I grew up knowing these people who were, you know, an older generation. But they were all big names in textiles. So I called — they're all my mentors. Astrid showed me her business acumen, and — by example, and the other two, Edna was the one who brought out the more creative spirit in me, and Alice taught me quality, material quality.

MS. MCQUAID: And I'm curious why you didn't go into more kind of — or at least some of your work, more industrial production. What was it that — you've been very consistent.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, actually — yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, I'm not aware of any —

MS. HERNMARCK: No, I haven't. Well, I never learned anything about it because Edna's — I took it back to her, you know. I described to you how she used name artists to find designs to weave to establish that field. It was a protest to the fact that the school, our school, was not financed to have the modern equipment, industrial equipment.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh. But was there ever a situation where — like in the Bauhaus, for instance, they would go to Krefeld, and they'd work with different factories. Was there ever that kind of apprenticeship that you would —

MS. HERNMARCK: No, I didn't. I was actually — yes, I was — the summer before I went to Alice Lund I was in Denmark at a silk — no, what was it called — frame — printing film to —

MS. MCQUAID: Silk-screen?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, you had these big square frames with patterned different colors. And then you'd go like this, back and forth.

MS. MCQUAID: Silk — yeah, silk-screen?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, that's what it's called. So I did that for one summer. But it didn't appeal to me particularly. I don't know why. But many of my contemporaries were — got into printing much more. There were other people my age who grouped — one's called The Ten Group, and they're quite well known, and they had a fantastic production in prints. So more people were doing that. In fact, very few stayed with weaving. I don't think even then one had patience with it. It seemed hard to —

MS. MCQUAID: But do you think there was something that separated — because I mean, you're coming from it almost from, like, an art background in a way. And someone like Astrid — was she coming from it from a different standpoint or —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, yes. You see, she came from Boras. [Laughs.] There's a museum in Boras. There's a textile institute in Boras, which is very advanced and was always more technically advanced than either the school in Stockholm or in Gothenburg. So if you wanted to go into industry, you would have studied at Boras Textile Institute because they stayed — and they have gone into all these intelligent textiles and all this new stuff. So that's how it divided —

MS. MCQUAID: So much more technical skills?

MS. HERNMARCK: Much more technical. So that — and that's because the textile industry always existed in that part of Sweden, near Gothenburg. There was never a textile industry near Stockholm. I mean, the distance is, like, a five-hour drive. [Laughs.] I mean, so —

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: The east and the west coast never talked.

MS. MCQUAID: That's interesting because I'm curious, like, since you're married to an industrial designer, you know, if there was ever any collaboration that you ever did, upholstery — I mean, kind of looking at — you know, I know —

MS. HERNMARCK: The only collaboration we did was when we first had met and he was still doing American Airlines. And of course I was weaving unique tapestries. But Henry Dreyfuss had sent me to meet Niels [Diffrient]. And I had done the Weyerhaeuser of tapestry, the rainforest trees [*Rainforest*, 1971], so he knew who I was because of that. So he saw me, and he said that he'd like to put tapestries on the bulkhead of the airplanes. And so he talked about 25 airplanes, kind of a test. But then of course — by then I was still married to my second husband [Michael Maconochie], and I was just about to move to England.

So — but it was the only hope of a job I had when I moved to England was to do these tapestries, except it turned out the airline had 250 airplanes that needed this thing, not just 25. And of course I was not set up to do that. So he then sort of took my idea — you know, obviously the idea was to do clouds or whatever. So he went to Edward Fields, and they did this, and that's what you've seen on the airplanes. But that was — Niels and me meeting resulted in that.

MS. MCQUAID: Interesting. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: But you know, we saw — we both understood that I wasn't going to be able to handle that sort of — and I really wasn't set up. I suppose I stayed away from it because I suppose I wanted to be independent. But I knew already in the '60s, that actually both Edna Martin with Handarbetets Vänner and Alice Lund: they both wanted me to stay and run those businesses, take over after them. But they — that would mean me meeting a payroll. And I wasn't ready to take —

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: I wanted to develop a whole —

MS. MCQUAID: No, it's a whole — yeah, it's a whole 'nother kind of level.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, I mean, I had been entrepreneurial, but I wasn't that much of an entrepreneur at first. I saw myself as an artist, which is what Edna had taught me to be. And so I felt that I couldn't do that. And I suppose that's one reason why I —

MS. MCQUAID: And have you felt — when you said that in the early '90s, things took a plunge, I mean, I assume that's your — you didn't get as many commissions.

MS. HERNMARCK: No, the '90s were a break. I got some, and it switched. It was more art agents. One interesting thing is I never, ever in my entire life got a job — well, I guess I can't quite say that because some ships' interiors and interior design firms have never commissioned. But now I realize when I say that — I realize that my Time Warner job came because of that [Four Seasons tapestries, mid-2000s?]. But —

MS. MCQUAID: So mainly it's through the architects that you —

MS. HERNMARCK: And art consultants. You see, the interior designers have a budget they're working with. And they won't spend all of it on one thing. So it never, you know, worked.

MS. MCQUAID: Well, and also because with interior designers, if they fill it up with furniture, they get a markup too on the furniture, right?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. I suppose. I don't — yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, that's — I mean, I think they do build up —

MS. HERNMARCK: That's part of the way they earn money. I never thought of that.

MS. MCQUAID: Exactly. And so with an art piece, I'm not sure — I don't know how that would work.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, the thing is, when I would have needed an art gallery or an agent to help me, I couldn't afford them. I didn't think I could afford them. And then when I could afford them, I didn't think I needed them anymore. But I've learned a very interesting lesson just this last year with Tom Grotta. That is, at my current job for Purdue University [*Tabula Rasa*, 2010], they turned to him to find me.

MS. MCQUAID: Interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it became his job. And so he — actually, I had sort of — my prices had softened during the '90s. I didn't know what to do. Now, Tom —

MS. MCQUAID: And that was before your relationship with Tom Grotta?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it started with him in the '90s, '94. But I never let him touch my commissions. That wasn't — you know, I hung on to them myself. So this was the first time that he helped, but it turned out I got more paid than I have ever been. You see, this is a very important lesson. [Laughter.]

MS. MCQUAID: Well, I think, too, it's —

MS. HERNMARCK: Even though he added his 40 percent. You know, it's astonishing.

MS. MCQUAID: Sometimes you don't know how much you're worth. It's — I mean, it takes someone objective and you can undersell yourself.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. But you see, here's an art committee at Purdue. I can understand why they would rather work with an art agent because they want to be on the professional — they have been given money to spend on art.

MS. MCQUAID: Well, and they also — it's a — it's a — it's a way — it's a consultant, too. I mean, it's like getting advice from a professional. So they want to know — whether they like it or not, they still want that kind of —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Secure —

MS. MCQUAID: — security as well as just knowing that they've made the right choice. So whether they have to speak to a board or approval process, they know that it's actually —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, that is very interesting because theirs is the art committee representing the art school at Purdue. That's a building where that — where they teach all art forms, including dance, music, theater. And they have been given this sum of money to buy art with. And of course that was just when the crash happened, just before the crash. And everybody sort of — you know, let's lay our hands on this money. [Laughs.] But they couldn't use it for anything else. And it went through some stages so that it didn't get used right away, and it actually sat and grew to become more money, so they could buy two pieces of art.

MS. MCQUAID: That's fantastic.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's amazing, perfectly amazing. So — and all through the — since I had my big show in '99, when I thought, well, I can die after this — [laughter] — [inaudible] — this is perfect — I've had continued work for another 10 years.

MS. MCQUAID: Are you turning away work? Do you have more — I mean, is it —

MS. HERNMARCK: No, not really. It's just gone — dovetailed itself nicely.

MS. MCQUAID: It's just — right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, it's really extraordinary.

MS. MCQUAID: That's fantastic. No, that's a good place to be.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. And every time I think it must be the last. I mean, I'm always ready for it to end. [Laughs.] But of course I have built up a certain reputation that puts me in a good spot when people think about me.

MS. MCQUAID: Absolutely, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: At Purdue it was the woman who runs the textile department who'd been admiring me for 20 years. So she persuaded the whole committee of 11 people that it was going to be textiles. Well, she was really —

MS. MCQUAID: Well, I think your work too — it seems like you're a good choice because your work does bring together so many different arts. I mean, it's sort of public art. It has the scale of architecture in a way. It has — it also has that sort of fine art quality to it. It has sometimes the photographic quality to it. It has the textile — certainly the textile quality. So it actually kind of — it brings a lot of the different arts together into one piece.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Well, and then I'm willing, of course, to think of a theme that will appeal to them, that will mean something to everybody. I mean, they always — in the States you feel that it's considered commercial art and therefore worth less when you make it match a need. But I never believed that that lessened it. I mean, what about Michelangelo or Leonardo? I mean, what's the difference? I don't see the difference. But the hard-nosed people think, you know, that there is a difference. It's not worth as much. I think it's — right now, Louise Allrich has a difficult job because two of my best pieces, my flowers and textiles — so — which I've been wondering why — what will happen to them for years. It's the out-of-focus and in-focus — [inaudible].

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, right. Yeah, yeah, sure.

MS. HERNMARCK: This is a pair of tapestries — did you happen to see my show at FIT? ["Monumental and Intimate: Tapestries by Helena Hernmarck," June 22 — August 28, 1999.]

MS. MCQUAID: I don't think I did see your show at FIT.

MS. HERNMARCK: You see, the *New York Times* refused to go and review it. Everyone I knew who had ever written about me —

MS. MCQUAID: It's just —

MS. HERNMARCK: They had something against going to FIT.

MS. MCQUAID: I think it's — you know, I think it's textiles. I think there's just something about that. I think it's difficult to get people to focus on textiles, although when they do, like with Tom's show — Tom Campbell's show, I mean, it's like, it was extraordinary.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, quarter of a million people.

MS. MCQUAID: And I — I know. So —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. No, it's good because I had 60 —

MS. MCQUAID: I think it's changing, and I'm wondering if it was just sort of that cusp of sort of when things were changing about how people feel about textiles. I think, you know, they see them as sort of dowdy — I mean, things that we, you know, wear every day, and not particularly interesting. But I think — I don't know, I think — I think it was on the verge of change at that point.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well — what was I going to say? I had 65 pieces covering 40 years.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it was slightly different in Sweden. Some things I wasn't allowed to borrow for that long time. And some things I used stuff that was already in Sweden. I shipped stuff from the U.S. to Sweden, but nothing from Sweden came to the U.S. So they were slightly different. But it was, generally speaking, the same.

MS. MCQUAID: Did it open here in FIT?

MS. HERNMARCK: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] June of 1999.

MS. MCQUAID: And then it went to Sweden?

MS. HERNMARCK: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] So in Sweden there were 61,000 people went to see it.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: So — and I was afraid they'd think it was too American. You know, they're slightly un-American over — or anti-American in some ways. And I was somewhat concerned. But it turned out that because people couldn't figure out how I'd done it, it interested the men as well as the women. The women dragged their husbands there kicking and screaming, and then they were fascinated. And I had actually minimizing glasses hanging on the wall in there, so they could use — they could look at it at different distances.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's great. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And they couldn't figure out how I'd done it. But the other thing that happened in Sweden was that before it opened I had two television channels, the only two they had in — they each came and put me on the news. Now, that wouldn't happen in America — [laughs] — not textile — I mean, not in Sweden

either. It was extraordinary.

MS. MCQUAID: No, that's amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: So — anyhow, so these pieces that have belonged to the Trammell Crow family in Dallas ever since they inherited them when they bought a building that had them —

MS. MCQUAID: So how large are they?

MS. HERNMARCK: 10-by-22 feet.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: Or 11-by-20 feet, each one. And so —

MS. MCQUAID: And this is called, just so that we —

MS. HERNMARCK: *Poppies* [1978]. *Poppies and Bluebonnets* [1979].

MS. MCQUAID: *Poppies*, okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: And they hung in a building designed by I.M. Pei and partners — Harry Cobb, facing opposite entrances. And it was a beautiful lobby. I don't see the lobby here, but the developer was going to do several buildings, but in the end he couldn't swing it. So it didn't become the big center it was meant to be. So it was just the one building, and eventually the developer sold the building, including the tapestries, to Trammell Crow, who is another big developer in Dallas and who then proceeded to hang them first in the hotel and then in the shopping center. But between the hotel and the shopping center, I had access to them for my show. And of course I'd been thinking, what's going to become of them because this tapestry in Sweden — people were so excited by this tapestry that they ran into the Nationalmuseum, which was another museum, "Where are the *Poppies*?"

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: And the people in the ticket booth, who said, "They are over there" — [laughter] — because they knew what they were talking about. I mean, that's how big it was. And one woman called the director of the museum and cried on the phone. I mean — [laughs] — because they just loved this.

MS. MCQUAID: That's amazing. They're beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it was — it was extremely —

MS. MCQUAID: Well, and it's the scale of it, too. I think that's sort of what is — I mean, it's hard to kind of

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, well, you see then I had started to discuss with Lotus Stack about what to do with everything. And so she — actually, in 2008 I donated 22 textiles to Minneapolis and archives to the university because they work together, so that seemed like a good solution. But meanwhile after that had been done, Louise Mackie calls and comes here, actually, and looks — some years ago she was here looking, saying she wants to buy big pieces from this era, or not buy but be given. You know, it's not a matter of having money to buy anything. So I knew she was interested. Then when Connie [Mildred Constantine] died, Louise Mackie got the sample to this tapestry from men daughters —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, from Connie?

MS. HERNMARCK: — because Connie has donated her small works collection.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, to Cleveland.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so when that happened it had to be appraised. The sample had to be appraised. So then the daughters contacted Louise Allrich about appraising the sample. So Louise and I started to talk. Louise Allrich, Louise Mackie and Louise MacMillen who — three Louises! [Laughter.] Anyway, so this is — it's — what's happening now is that Louise Macmillen figured if Cleveland is this interested and have agreed to accept both of them as a donation, I'll ship them up to Cleveland right away. So they are already at Cleveland.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's fantastic.

MS. HERNMARCK: And meanwhile Louise Allrich is putting together an appraisal of these two. And that's a big

job because that has to be accepted by the IRS. And she wants to put me in a certain level. And I hope that it can be passed.

MS. MCQUAID: That's amazing, though. That's fantastic. That's so great.

MS. HERNMARCK: To me, this is tremendous.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, it's such a nice sort of — to have the sample as well as the large pieces.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, yeah. Now, the — all the correspondence about this job is in Minneapolis because that was already given. I gave up to 1987. So — but two institutions can cooperate if ever need be.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that's not really a problem. So this — I was the first person to weave anything out of focus. So that I can claim. I also claim that I was first to weave from a photograph, but maybe not. I mean, it depends how you interpret it. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: So what — so when was — when was your first — what was your — in terms of your work, I want to look at some kind of early work, like what you think is your most pivotal early work, and sort of mid — you know, kind of midcareer, when you started kind of with the photography in your work.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it came in — it — the photography — the Swedish one, which you marked — I think it was where you had — this.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: This was a transition because until this point the work had looked like — where is it? It's not a very good — of this, this style, which is work I developed —

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, kind of very calligraphic and —

MS. HERNMARCK: In art school I developed this —

MS. MCQUAID: It's beautiful, though.

MS. HERNMARCK: — with Edna Martin as my teacher.

MS. MCQUAID: I love that — I love that piece.

MS. HERNMARCK: So this carpet I made for my father. And this carpet I made for Edna.

MS. MCQUAID: Is that still — do you still have that?

MS. HERNMARCK: No, it — this is at Boras museum. I gave it to them. And this is at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm.

MS. MCQUAID: It's beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: And Edna Martin's carpet, which — maybe there's not a picture here — which was one of the best. I'll show it to you. This is the front — This is a great tool.

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.] So you have an iPhone. So y'all are —

MS. HERNMARCK: It's not an iPhone. It's just the iPod Touch.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, iPod Touch, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because I don't have the reception, right. But I've got everything I ever made on here.

MS. MCQUAID: Isn't that amazing to have that all in one —

MS. HERNMARCK: It is amazing, yeah. So I've divided everyone into five-year segments. So the earliest is '62 to '69.

MS. MCQUAID: So this — and this, do you have — it has the information about where all these pieces are?

MS. HERNMARCK: No, not on here. That I have other records of. This was a carpet I made for Edna Martin.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: And I — somewhere, but maybe I didn't bring it, my picture of —

MS. MCQUAID: So this was a carpet, you said, for Edna?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, for her house. But I have such a beautiful —

MS. MCQUAID: And where is that?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, that, you see — Edna —

MS. MCQUAID: That's so — I can't even see what it — how was it made?

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh, it's —

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, what is it — is it — it's wool? Or is it —

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh, sure. It's just like — it's just wool.

MS. MCQUAID: It looks like a drawing.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it does, because it's made just like this.

MS. MCQUAID: Yes. I know, I just love that.

MS. HERNMARCK: You see, it has the rosepath pattern, which is treadled. And then — and then the first one I did was called *Alpha*, of course, and then *Beta*. This is *Alpha*. This is a carpet I wove in art school. Here you see it more closely, that some of it is regularly pedaled pattern in the background.

MS. MCQUAID: So what is the — rosepath refers to the pattern?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, it refers to a kind of a twill pattern. You see it here, a regular sort of — except I make mistakes when I thread it on purpose to make it a little uneven. But then when — then what Edna taught us was, blow up the design photographically. That was new. Not do it on square paper, but photographically because then if you draw a line quickly, it's blown up, and the speed is still there. And so when I then weaved the line, I just pick it up from the cartoon. I have the cartoon under the warp. So I just follow what was on the cartoon. And so that same speed is then in the weaving.

MS. MCQUAID: It's — right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And in between it's — I use the pedals. But the minute something happens, I stop the pedals, and I pick it by hand. So it's very —

MS. MCQUAID: It's beautiful. I love this. How large is this piece?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, I'll tell you what happened to it. I mean, Edna got so old she needed to be taken care of, so her daughter moves into her home. And — but she can't do it without first getting rid of Edna's furniture and her belongings because she needs the space. So it all goes on auction. So I was saying to her, "Should I really let it go? Should I?" — it had been at Waldemarsudde, the show. And I'll show you a picture of what — it was slightly worn, but Bukowskis took it — the auction house in Stockholm — and they valued it at 12,000 kroner, which is — you divide it with seven or six, like \$2,000. And so somebody bought it for \$10,000, which I know about because every time a sale goes through Bukowskis, I get, as the artist, five percent. So I knew that it had gone for only 40,000 [kroner]. Meanwhile my contemporaries in art school who do glass were selling their work for 20 times the original price. But that's textiles for you. And then it was sold again. So it's somewhere out in Sweden, and I don't know who owns it.

MS. MCQUAID: And how big is it?

MS. HERNMARCK: It's two-by-four meters. It's like six by — it's big.

MS. MCQUAID: It's big. It's so —

MS. HERNMARCK: And it is a little worn, but it is beautiful. And Edna —

MS. MCQUAID: That's gorgeous.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. So I should have actually bought it myself. But I thought it would — after my show I

thought the value would have gone up. But it hadn't, you see. That was the interesting thing.

MS. MCQUAID: It's beautiful. Well, you know, it's — who knows.

MS. HERNMARCK: Who knows. And it says "Barynina" on it because I used my first husband's [Jan Barynin] married name at first. Then when I married the second time — I had started to call myself "Hernmarck" after the first divorce, and — but after marrying the second time and then applying for a passport, the Swedes said to me, "You can't call yourself Hernmarck. You married again. You have to — Hernmarck — Maconochie-Hernmarck or — " so then I said, "Well, how do I get Hernmarck back? How do I get it — the right to use my name?" "Well, you have to go through the patent office in Stockholm, and your rest of the family has to agree that you can call yourself — [laughs] — you know.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh my God. The rest of whose family? Your —

MS. HERNMARCK: My family. [Laughter.] So after all this I got it back. And then I learned next time I got married, you tell the authorities before you get married that you want to keep your name. And then it's not a problem. [Laughter.]

MS. MCQUAID: Oh my God.

MS. HERNMARCK: Anyhow, so I went through that.

MS. MCQUAID: So those were your first —

MS. HERNMARCK: So those are my — or that's what I had done. And I had — with this, which is not very well reproduced here. It's a very beautiful piece. I'll show that to you too. It's owned by Nationalmuseum, but it was part of an exhibition in 1964 called "Form Fantasi" — Form Imagination. [Liljevalchs Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden.] And — right, there it is. And that was first bought by a gallery in Malmö called — what was it called — and now it belongs to the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm.

MS. MCQUAID: It's beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that one — the Stockholm — the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm has five or six pieces. They have the big one of the newspapers, which I am very happy about.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, I mean, in terms of these works — I mean, I don't mean that. It's probably a stupid question, what is your favorite, but —

MS. HERNMARCK: This is one of my favorites. I made it in 1968, and it is one of the best.

MS. MCQUAID: And what is the name of this one?

MS. HERNMARCK: *Newspapers*.

MS. MCQUAID: *Newspapers*.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's about 10-by-15 feet. It's three meters by five meters. And it was done in three segments, so there are two seams. Here's one seam, and here's another one. And we wove it in six weeks.

MS. MCQUAID: In six weeks?

MS. HERNMARCK: We were young and strong. Me and my — I always had assistants. Here — at the back here, you'll see the name of them [Referring to my book published in 1999 -HH]. We have — here are people who worked with me.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: And this is year by year what I — what we made. So those early pieces are in here — '63, *Alpha* and *Beta*. I made them before I moved. I moved to Canada in 1964. So this one was woven in Canada for the Swedish State Commission for the Arts.

[Audio break.]

MS. MCQUAID: Okay. So we were talking about Astrid.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes. I mentioned my three mentors. As I — Astrid is one I haven't described yet so much. I saw a lot of her as a child because she worked very closely with Sven Markelius, you know, on different projects.

MS. MCQUAID: So that was through your aunt that you met Astrid, or was this —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, and my father, too, and my mother. I mean, she came to — I was living in London from '55 to '58, and she was there having dinner with us. She had her son in London for a while, and he had, I remember — quickly — he had arrived at the wrong railway station, so we couldn't find him.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh my God.

MS. HERNMARCK: So there was a big hullabadoo [sic] about that. But he was found. And I talked to him the other day. [Laughter.] So that was good. But — so she knew — everybody knew everybody, essentially. But she was a networker before, and I believe part of my success was because I learned something from her, and that was that if you want to be introduced in a country that you were not born in, it is good to ask somebody in another country to — the country you're in, those people don't have the perspective of somebody has — who lives outside.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So for example, I was in England, so I call Astrid in Stockholm and I say, "Who — what architects do you think I should see? I'm here for a few days." "Oh, you should see so and so and so and so." Next day I have two jobs.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so that I learned in the '60s. I got the QE2 commission [*Launching of QE2 Triptych*, 1968] and the Strand Palace commission [*Cricket Match*, 1968]. So then in 1972, I was going to leave Canada and move to England. And I said, before I leave the North American continent, I'm going to tour the U.S. I'm going to meet people in the U.S. So for three months I drove around. But before I did that, I talked to a man in London called Paul Reilly, who was head of the Council for Industrial Design. And he was a friend of Astrid and of my parents and so on. So I said to him, "Who shall I meet in America?" And he wrote 10 letters, and I lived on that for 20 years.

MS. MCQUAID: Unbelievable.

MS. HERNMARCK: And I met Niels.

MS. MCQUAID: Unbelievable.

MS. HERNMARCK: So I mean — [laughs]. But Astrid knew who she was recommending and who she was recommending me to, and so did Paul Reilly. In other words, it's somebody knew what they were talking about.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: I don't understand networking on the computer, which is a completely — you know, I can't imagine how that would work when you realize how much the personal —

MS. MCQUAID: Right. No, the face-to-face makes all the difference.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Yeah. So Astrid had this handbag, which was — it was a regular handbag. She was always beautifully made up, like a film star. But it was a flat case, and the other half of the handbag was her office. So she would fold that down and she'd have postcards, stamps, pens, and her address books. And the minute she saw something which would be a fruitful meeting between two people, she would write postcards to them saying, "You should talk to this person; you should talk to this person."

MS. MCQUAID: Unbelievable.

MS. HERNMARCK: And she kept doing this all the time.

MS. MCQUAID: So she was like an early — it's like a prototype for the BlackBerry, in a way. [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: She was. And so she was — she had studied at the Royal College of Art, so she very early got very friendly with people in England and knew the right people, and then she took it from there. And of course, she was very friendly with the Knolls and with Eero Saarinen. In fact, Eero and Astrid dated for a while.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, really?

MS. HERNMARCK: But that came to nothing. So she was all over the world, and in Japan and, you know, all the places that were interested in design, she was a presence. And unfortunately, nobody has written a real book about her yet.

MS. MCQUAID: That's interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: But while she was still living, people — she wanted people to do it while she was still living, but she was such — she wouldn't leave that writer alone. I mean, the writers knew that, that if I start work with Astrid, she'll just dominate the whole thing, so I'm not going to bother. [Laughter.] Because she still deserves to have — because she was — and in fact, I was just talking to Paul — he's with the *Metropolis* [magazine], I think.

MS. MCQUAID : Oh, Paul Makovsky.

MS. HERNMARCK: Makovsky, yeah. He's totally into Knoll and textiles of Scandinavia.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, Florence Knoll, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So he had sent me an article in Swedish about what happened in 1946 when Hans Knoll and Florence Knoll had started to go to Sweden. But first of all, they had a connection with Sweden that went back one generation because Hans Knoll's father Walter was working with Swedish furniture makers, so there was a much more deep-going relationship there than Paul realized. So in fact Knoll bringing in modern textiles had everything to do with the Swedish textiles.

MS. MCQUAID: That's interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it was there they got all the — they ordered it and they knew the people. So this was in

'46.

MS. MCQUAID: Very interesting. Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: And I'm so glad to hear that he's working on that, because it will come out that the Swedish scene was buzzing. Stockholm had not gone through World War II. It was the one city where business was going on the whole time. And so — and of course, Swedish architecture and everything was — they were building and they were tearing down. Sometimes you didn't need the war. They tore down half of Stockholm anyway. But they built it up new and modern. And Astrid was in the middle of all this and always connecting people. She was fabulous.

So when she came to Montreal in 1967, I was living there, when the World's Fair [Expo '67 -HH]— and so I said to — "Astrid, I'm your chauffeur. Here I am."

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So, you know. And until she died, she always had piles [of paper -HH] on her desk. "This person is interested in these articles, this person this —" she'd be cutting out for me. "I'll send this book to Helena and I'll send that to that one." You know. And after the pile had grown a bit, then she'd send it out. And I have them down below in the basement.

MS. MCQUAID: Unbelievable.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, with the big handwriting.

MS. MCQUAID: Incredible. So did she continue — I mean, did she work throughout her life or did she —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes. She spent many years at — after NK Textilkammaren closed, I'm a bit fuzzy about exactly what she did. She had special projects. You know, she was working for the embassies and she was producing the textiles. But they just spent many years getting her archives in the most fantastic order. I know she gave them to the Nationalmuseum, which I don't know if that was a mistake or not, but I don't think — I don't know how they are treated. Because she was so all over the place that people just took her for granted. That's the other thing that happens. And then, of course, after she died, everyone's moving on.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it has to go down before it's sort of rediscovered. But I think now that MoMA [Museum of Modern Art] has published the books with the three texts — you've seen it, maybe —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Finally. You know, I'm after the Swedes all the time to translate things, because the world is interested. And they — it never occurs at all. You know, "No, we want to keep our Swedish language." Well, that's all very well, but the people who are interested can't read it, you idiot." [Laughter.] And finally at least they got that done.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. That's great. Well, before — I remember before lunch we were talking about some of the — some of your kind of most important textiles, the ones that you felt were kind of either breakthroughs or departures in some way, and you were talking about the tapestry *Newspapers*.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, this one definitely, done in Canada. Then I did one for the National Film Board [*Snake Labyrinth*, 1967]. No, the QE2 come actually — came before this. This was the fall of '68. I did four big jobs in six months. I did this, I did the Strand Palace, I did this one, and one for Habitat.

MS. MCQUAID: And how many people worked on this one? You said it was —

MS. HERNMARCK: There were two of us weaving it, I think, in six weeks. [Refers to *Newspapers* only -HH]

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: I only had one assistant in those days. We can look that up here.

MS. MCQUAID: That's incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: But, you know, I worked day and night seven days a week, you know. When I had work, it was just full steam ahead. I don't — the Canadian, David [Kaye], Elisabeth [Leslie] — I think, hmm, Angela— but I don't see her name here [Angela Reynolds -HH]. She was with me those earliest years. I guess I started the day we came here. Well, it was the Canadian time. But that was done before David entered the scene. He has a gallery in Toronto now.

So, no, we were just so enthused, you know, by the activity going on, that it was just fun. And of course, the rock and roll — I kept playing the loud music all the time.

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.] To keep you going.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it was — you know, you saw the picture of *Little Richard* [1969].

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: [Inaudible.]

Ms. MCQUAID: I love you in the miniskirt. I love that photograph. It's amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: [Laughs.] It was published in the newspaper in Montreal. And these people called me on the phone and they said they liked my legs. [Laughter.] So I didn't know what to think of that exactly.

MS. MCQUAID: Forget the tapestry. [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Anyhow, so this, of course, was after I moved to — let me see, this was the first one I did in New York. So this was —

MS. MCQUAID: And this piece is called what?

MS. HERNMARCK: *Sailing* [1976].

MS. MCQUAID: *Sailing*.

MS. HERNMARCK: *Sailing*. So *Sailing* started out my life with Niels here.

MS. MCQUAID: And there's your loft.

MS. HERNMARCK: There's our loft, yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: So is this the place that you moved to when you — I mean, you moved to this loft.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, moved straight into there from — I mean, what a contrast. I lived in this — this house was built in 1540, in Dorset. That's where I moved from to that.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my gosh.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that was total contrast.

MS. MCQUAID: A one-room from —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, this, of course, was a big house—called Clenston Manor in Dorset—of stone and slate. But yes, one room. I loved living in the loft. That was really great.

MS. MCQUAID: And how — So was Niels — so tell me about how you met Niels and then also — and why you moved to New York.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, because of Niels. But — on this trip that Paul Reilly had sent me on, we went to L.A. to visit Henry Dreyfuss. And that was in May, and by October he was dead.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: He committed suicide, you know, with his wife. So it's one of the last few — last things he arranged, was for me and Niels to get together. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Unbelievable.

MS. HERNMARCK: Which was — you know. And of course he jokes, and he used to call Niels his illegitimate son. I mean, he liked — [laughs].

MS. MCQUAID: Aw.

MS. HERNMARCK: So we met in '72, but then I was still married and I was moving to England. And then I had my big show at LACMA in '74, and Niels came to that opening because he had children in Los Angeles that he would go and visit, and he had two clients, so he would go a week every month. So he came to the opening. And that was '74. And I think we'd met — I think we'd had a drink in New York before that. And then we immediately — after a few weeks we decided to get married, and that was the end of — [laughter]. Then it was a bit of a job, because I had to get divorced; I had to emigrate; I had to make five tapestries before I could get here.

MS. MCQUAID: My God, when it rains, it pours.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that was an interesting '75, all that going on.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow. A key year.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, 1974, '75. I moved in the fall of '75, and then we got married in '76. But we moved into the loft in November of 1975, or October, actually. It wasn't quite finished. It didn't even have glass in some of the windows; it was plastic.

MS. MCQUAID: Unbelievable.

MS. HERNMARCK: But our furniture just went like this. I mean, it fit exactly. And we had discovered we used the same Swedish bread box.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, really?

MS. HERNMARCK: He had the same wood breadbox that I had. [Laughter.]

MS. MCQUAID: So there was no fights over —

MS. HERNMARCK: No, we have both many times said that having the same taste is — makes a lot to help a marriage along.

MS. MCQUAID: Absolutely.

MS. HERNMARCK: You're not fighting that fight all the time.

MS. MCQUAID: Or at least if you don't have the same taste, at least one can impose their taste on the other — [laughter] — control it.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes. [Laughs.] No, he was very accommodating, I must say. There were some of his paintings I didn't like, so — [laughter] — I didn't hang them up. And he had never met anyone who decided things like that for him, because he had always been the strong one. So if any problem we have is because we're both very determined, what we like.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: This is interesting, in the *Sailing* tapestry, how in fact the ropes — the stitches go that way, but it looks like a rope that goes that way. That's the eye filling in the missing information.

MS. MCQUAID: Interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: And this I wove in — the first thing I made in the loft. And I had Molly Fletcher helping me at the time. And it has — here it's cropped a bit, seeing it here. So I wove it from below, going up, even though I could have done it one going that way. I wanted to weave the water horizontally, so we took —

MS. MCQUAID: Interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: — the trouble to sew them together. But sometimes it doesn't matter, and you look at the picture and decide which way to do this.

MS. MCQUAID: So you think it would have mattered with the water? You would have difficulties

MS. HERNMARCK: It would have been a little harder to make it look like it was moving in that way.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Later I did another sailing boat with the water going the other direction — I'll show it to you — which went to San Francisco, and it is called *On The Bay*, and it is '81, I think. When did I do *On The Bay*? [1982-83 -HH] We'd just moved here. It's here.

MS. MCQUAID: God, that's amazing. So was this the first instance of your using photographs, or did you start earlier than this?

MS. HERNMARCK: No, I started earlier because I started — actually it's so similar, but not — not the same, that — I wove the dollar bill. [*Dollar Bill*, 1967.]

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, yes, I remember.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes. That's woven in the other direction.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: So here, because it's so diagonal and the water is churning, it worked to do the water in the other way.

MS. MCQUAID: Unbelievable. So that's from a — so both of these are from photographs.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. The first pure photograph was, in fact, Bubba Smith of the Baltimore Colts — because that I just cut out of *Life* magazine. [*Bubba Smith*, 1969.]

MS. MCQUAID: And what was the reason? What did you —

MS. HERNMARCK: Did I need it for a show? No, I just felt — why did I need this tapestry? I think I was planning an exhibition. I can't remember.

MS. MCQUAID: Was it — But what made you kind of turn to photographs as a source?

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh. Because I had started with first of all the faces in the newspaper tapestry. [*Newspapers*, 1968.]

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. I think it was Marilyn Monroe, is it?

MS. HERNMARCK: No, it's actually not. People think — It's Jennie Lee, who was minister of culture. [In UK the Labor government of Prime Minister Wilson -HH]

MS. MCQUAID: Oh! Oh! Upside down she looks like Marilyn Monroe.

MS. HERNMARCK: I know. Because Warhol had just started to do the pictures — this is Jennie — this is Marie Antoinette. So in choosing the images from the front pages, I decided to do women, not male politicians or accidents or earthquakes or wars. But wars are mentioned here, because this is — first of all, I chose *Le Figaro* as the base because they use so many different typography?

MS. MCQUAID: Type face, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it says "United States fighting in South Vietnam." And here was a U-boat that had gotten lost in the Mediterranean, which they never found. And *Le Figaro*, of course — I couldn't resist mentioning Che Guevara up here, and Mozart somewhere. And, of course, this is *Pravda*, and that's Lenin. And this is the *Sunday Times*, and this — I don't know what to say except it refers to Chairman Mao, so some Chinese delegation in Stockholm got furious that we were mentioning Chairman Mao after he was gone. You're supposed to redo the art.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: This I don't know what it says. [Laughter.] And the big problem was that there was no German. And of course, it turned out that most of those journalists going to that room were German, so I never heard the end of that. So then when I made the big one with the money for the bank in Atlanta —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, yeah, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: — by then I had — I remembered that lesson.

MS. MCQUAID: So this you laid out as a collage?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: And how large was it? Was it fairly —

MS. HERNMARCK: It was about five-by-three meters. So that's like 9 feet by 15 feet.

MS. MCQUAID: But the collage itself?

MS. HERNMARCK: The collage was only about this size.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. No, the designs are always about that size. And that design I'd given to the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. So they have it.

I did this for the Bank of America in Atlanta. And it's hanging in the lobby where the bankers were using a bank, so I thought to myself, now, who are the biggest customers of banks coming to this bank? And I had made the composition out of the money I had — could lay my hands on, but I had no Canadian and no Japanese. So I said, my God, I want to add them, because they were the biggest customers. [The bills belonged to friends also -HH]

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right. So this is *Currency*, of 1992.

MS. HERNMARCK: [Inaudible] — otherwise, it's 18 currencies. It can't be the whole world.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. No.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it was before the euro, so a lot of these are no — that's Italy, with the building; that's Germany; this is Spain. That's a \$50 with Franklin on it. And behind that, I think, is a Swiss, and this, I think, was Portuguese. That no longer exists. That's Swedish. That's English. And that no longer exists. No, it does.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, it does exist. Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: So.

MS. MCQUAID: That's amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: The Dutch is gone.

No, no, it's — the other thing that shows up in my tapestries is how technology developed, because the first time I used a copy machine was for the QE2, where I went to Cunard in 1968 and wanted them to give me their photographs of the launching ceremony, the black and white prints, and they said, no, no, no, we can't give those away; we'll just make Xerox copies. Well, the Xerox copies —

MS. MCQUAID: So this was of the Xerox?

MS. HERNMARCK: — was better to do. And then came the laser copy machines. Of course, that's where I — newspapers.

MS. MCQUAID: So with this, then —

MS. HERNMARCK: But here I painted on it, too. You see, I've pieced together some newspapers, and then I've added pieces of shiny paper and painted on it and done these — which related to my early rosepath. [Newspapers, 1968.]

So this is a transitional, and it says Barynina Hernmarck. It's the only one that has both names. And then it became a clean photograph. And here, this is to show the technique, that that's that detailed.

MS. MCQUAID: Gosh. So this is [inaudible] springtime.

MS. HERNMARCK: So this is how — that's why we have to stand on the lawn with the binoculars reversed and look down — from standing on top of the loom, look down through binoculars to see if it works, because you can't see it from so close. It's very abstract close up. That's what makes the technique so intriguing, too. And this illustrates that.

MS. MCQUAID: And how do you — That's incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: So we have this blown up. In these days it was still black and white, so it was a problem because red and black, it was a problem to identify — [to separate red and black -HH]

MS. MCQUAID: So can you tell me — this is the *Springtime*, 1992. Can you tell me the process; I mean how — from — more or less from beginning to end. You start with a photograph.

MS. HERNMARCK: I start — I had — no, the start was me going to Callaway Gardens to photograph. So I kept calling to ask when are the azaleas and the dogwoods, when — so I was told tomorrow it's going to be — so I flew down. And so in those days I had a regular film camera and everything, and I spent three days.

MS. MCQUAID: And this is Callaway Gardens in Georgia.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Spent three days photographing. Of course, this picture was on the first roll, but you don't know that. [Laughter.] So I came home, and then I developed this picture. Here's the whole tapestry— the whole design is reproduced. Of course, it's in the same lobby as this; it's just the other side.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Here is the whole thing.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: So again, the little spot we're looking at is somewhere in there. So this is done in three parts. So this is humongous. It's 400 square feet, and I'm going to have to dye at least 300 pounds of yarn. So then I go to the dyers and spinners, and they are here.

MS. MCQUAID: And they're in Sweden.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: And do you always work with —

MS. HERNMARCK: I've gone — I sat down one day and counted how many times I've been there, and I realized I had been there once a year for 31 years. So I mean —

MS. MCQUAID: Wow. But do they do all of your dyeing for all of your projects, or do you —

MS. HERNMARCK: They have no — we buy yarn from other places too, but on the whole, the — because it's a special kind of sheep. I don't know where — there's a picture of them somewhere in here. So it's a family business. It's the third — now it's the fourth generation.

And so I knew the second generation first. And I would go with my design. I would figure out how many pounds were going to be needed. And by taking — copying my design and then cutting it into segments — like the sky segment, this water segment — and then we first weighed the full piece of paper and then we would cut off each piece. We can get an idea of how much each — of each family of color, how many kilos we'll need, more or less, you know.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, wow. And that's working just from a small sketch?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, but it doesn't matter. It's the same thing. The proportions are the same.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it doesn't matter.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because — so we used this very fine scale and just weigh this piece of paper.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And I cut — you know, I'll cut them — cut up the sketch so all the blues are over here and all the rest, you know, and then we weigh that.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: [Laughs.] It's quite fun. And then we start dyeing. And light colors have to be dyed in the wool. You know the expression "dyed in the wool"?

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: That means it's good quality. If you dye it in the skein, it means that you dip it in and out quickly —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — then it's going to not be colorfast. So what you do is, you dye the wool before you spin it solid.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then you spin it together with white fibers.

MS. MCQUAID: Ah.

MS. HERNMARK: And then it doesn't fade, because each fiber has been dyed properly.

MS. MCQUAID: Fiber.

MS. HERNMARCK: But it looks like blue because you've intermingled it with white.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Very interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's the same thing, of the eye pulling it together.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So we dye — we — I look at my design and I decide maybe — I can identify maybe 15 families of color. It's all in my head how I see.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then — so then we dye those 15 first. And we dye the wool and we dye some skeins, too. And I dyed different textured skeins. Some of them are one-ply and some of them are two-ply, because I weave in bundles. And there are all kinds of yarn, as long as the color's right, and it makes it more lively. So once — and then I could blend — then if we had done it in the wool, then we can also spin blends together. So we can weigh it; it says, white, 10 percent white, and figure out.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: I have all the cards in the studio on every job that we've done this and come up with a palate. Maybe from the 15 we'll end up with 80 colors.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: Of course, you mix it with white, you mix it with black.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right. And so they dye it and spin it.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes. And that's very unusual, to have that in the same business. And they're still there. And I helped keep them alive for years, of course, the same, with my big jobs.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. But I mean, you needed — yeah, a lot of — a lot of yarn for these works. [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So I was just made — there's a new governor of this province. And she just made me honorary ambassador.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, fantastic.

MS. HERNMARCK: And we had this lunch in June, in Sweden, and I could invite everyone I had worked with, everyone who had helped me, you know, carry on, and I've helped them and they've helped me. So we had a big table — luncheon laid out. It was lovely.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's fantastic. [Laughs.] Oh, that's great.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because, you know, I — we also placed a piece in the local museum, which is this piece — is recently done. But that means that there's one that hangs in the main museum.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: This book of course ends in '99. So —

MS. MCQUAID: [Inaudible] — then switched it back to the —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: So then — so once you have it all —

MS. HERNMARCK: So then I come back — then I come here.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, actually, no. This is made in Sweden. So even starting in '92, the biggest jobs I let them weave, even though I had staff here, because we were doing other things here; it was more manageable for us. And the difference here was that they spent five days a week working six or seven hours a day.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it was this constant — and I had charts. You know, we could plan exactly how long it would take by knowing how much they would do a day. So all those charts I have, I fill in every day. [Laughs.]

So this came out the loom three — in three pieces that have been sewn together. And this took the longest to do. It took 13 months for three people to make.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because there's so many — it's so difficult to know where you are in it.

MS. MCQUAID: The details. Oh, my God. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so that was done in '92. And then at the same time, we wove the money one here, the one with the currency.

MS. MCQUAID: And how much is — I mean, when — so this was woven in Sweden.

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

MS. MCQUAID: And how much supervision did you have to give?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, this was very interesting. Go back to that detail, again. I can't —

MS. MCQUAID: Because it seems like there's a lot of interpretation, in a sense, of, like, when to use what combination.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, yes, exactly. And that has to be their decisions.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: You see, they decide which will be pattern and which will be tabby —

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: — and the color combinations. So it takes them at least a year to weave my technique, to learn to think like me a little bit and do their own interpretation. But if I didn't hand them the pleasure of doing it, deciding themselves, they wouldn't enjoy it.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right, right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So I've got to give that trust. And that's a very interesting thing to do. And if — you have psychologically to make — to inspire them to do their best, of course you have to have the right attitude. You can't just come and complain.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it's a very interesting teamwork.

MS. MCQUAID: So how do you — how do you hire weavers? I mean, how does that — how does that happen?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, I don't; I inherit them. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Ah-ha!

MS. HERNMARCK: I mean, they come — we are now starting a new weaver. This is the latest one they did. And you see —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, and this is for Purdue? [*Tabula Rasa*, 2010.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. So here you see my design inserted into a photograph of the stairwell, when I realized that it's going to be seen from below a lot. This is how you see it from top. This — that's one of my weavers.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: She's now retiring. So the next one is 10 years. She's actually only 53, and now we're starting one who's 26.

And here's how we hung it in this museum in Sweden. It hasn't come to America yet.

MS. MCQUAID: It's beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's still over there, because we are having a struggle with the Purdue fire marshal. He wants to spray it.

MS. MCQUAID: Those fire marshals!

MS. HERNMARCK: So what we've done so far is, I finally tracked down some of kevlar fabric here in CT.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it's made in England. And they're just about to ship it to Sweden, and right now it's stuck in customs. And they're going to sew it on to the back along the edges. The top edge is sewn already, but these three edges will have that.

MS. MCQUAID: So then the face won't be a problem.

MS. HERNMARCK: No, I mean, I'm just meeting them a little bit. But there's still a threat that he will spray it, in which case it won't last very long. But he knows that.

MS. MCQUAID: And it also will probably change the color, too.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Well, you know, you won't be able to clean it, once that stuff is on it.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So I've told them, "Look, I've got 65 or 70 tapestries hanging in the U.S. right now out and not one has been sprayed." Do you think that makes an impression? No. [Laughs.] Now I have access to — I haven't made — actually, I now know that the guy who runs the museum in Indianapolis is very interested in conservation. I just learned that from my textile conservator in Minneapolis. His name is Max something. Now he's willing to —

MS. MCQUAID: And he's a conservator?

MS. HERNMARCK: He's an art museum director who is interested in —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, Max Anderson. Yeah, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes!

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, yeah, no, he is, because he's actually talked about — he's — I think at the Getty — at the Getty he talked about this. Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, yeah. Now if I could only make the marshal call him. But meanwhile, what I've done is weave a sample that I've backed with the same material, and he's going to try to set fire to it . Because he doesn't understand this art.

MS. MCQUAID: I know. And this — actually, we have the same issue at the Smithsonian, too, where it's trying to separate — this isn't artwork; this is not a kind of support material.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's not part of the furniture.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. It's not part of the architecture — I mean, in the — in the strictest sense of what he's saying — where you can actually pick materials.

The other thing is wool — is this made of wool?

MS. HERNMARCK: It's — yes.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, wool is actually a good fiber for — I know, it's —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, it is. But the — the only — it's not packed maybe as hard. It's not as tight a weave.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: I made the sample tight. But it's — we just scraped by a job in Boston, because the Boston fire marshals are worse than anybody, and finally they gave in. And we had even woven 10 samples that they were going to test, because if you want to use the regular test lab, I've learned, you've got to give them 10 samples.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's not enough with one. But in this case we've only done one. I could show you the one we — this is — this is actually 880 square feet. It's 80 feet long and 11 feet tall.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh my God. And so what was the final — I mean, what made them — what made them change their mind?

MS. HERNMARCK: I don't know. I think the architect talked them into it, the developer. You know, the developer is actually Fidelity Investment. They somehow worked it out, and it wasn't sprayed.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, you just can't — because I — we've tried this with something of — you know, one of our —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, one thing —

MS. MCQUAID: — pieces, and it's just — it's very problematic, very problematic.

MS. HERNMARCK: One thing I have learned is that one library, university library in Willimantic, CT, finally decided that since it covered less than 10 percent of all the wall surfaces in the space, it didn't matter. [*Open Door/Open Book*, 1999.]

MS. MCQUAID: Well, look at a library. Look at the paper. Look at the books.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, you can't have — I mean, that's as much of a fire threat as anything.

MS. HERNMARCK: No, I mean, the problem is that once it becomes bureaucratic territory, common sense vanishes.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, it's just — it's not there.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's like being afraid to be sued.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, it is.

MS. HERNMARCK: It is related to that. And it will make — impoverish our lives all the time — these threats of lawsuits.

MS. MCQUAID: Well, constrain — I know.

MS. HERNMARCK: I was going to give you — to — this, too, because I've written out the whole story of how this was made, from the meetings, through the work.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, wonderful.

MS. HERNMARCK: So here you have my process as it is right now.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: But it hasn't changed in all these years.

MS. MCQUAID: Interesting. Well, I'd love to read that.

[Sound of phone ringing.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

[Audio break.]

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: So this is a list of —

MS. HERNMARCK: And now I'm giving you a list — a location list of most — some of it is in storage —

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: — but it is all of the stuff that's owned by corporations in U.S. and Canada.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: And the stuff that's in the museums are on that list.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: And here's for Europe and Australia.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow. That's huge.

I'm curious about the Cooper-Hewitt piece [*Carnegie's Dream*, 1978]. Can you tell me a little bit about that, how that came about?

MS. HERNMARCK: [Laughs.] Well, it had something — what did it have to do with? I think it was —

MS. MCQUAID: Because I looked back in the file about the piece, and —

MS. HERNMARCK: It was made in '87 or something.

MS. MCQUAID: It was made in '77.

MS. HERNMARCK: '77.

MS. MCQUAID: So it was very soon after the Cooper-Hewitt opened in its present location in the Carnegie Mansion, because I think that was about '76 —

MS. HERNMARCK: Was Lisa Taylor still —

MS. MCQUAID: She was there.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because we were friendly with her. It had something to do with some competition or something. Everyone had to do something relating to the museum building.

MS. MCQUAID: So it must have been when it opened, when we opened there.

MS. HERNMARCK: No, it was later than that. You opened — we were still living in Europe.

MS. MCQUAID: No, we opened in '76.

MS. HERNMARCK: You did open in '76?

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Okay. It was —

MS. MCQUAID: So opened there, at that location, in '76.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: So I'm wondering if it's — if it had to do with that. Did she commission it? Because I couldn't find any information about it.

MS. HERNMARCK: No. I think it was a gift.

MS. MCQUAID: It was a gift —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: — but — no, yeah, that's true. It was a gift.

MS. HERNMARCK: It was in connection with something, and I keep thinking Milton Glaser. I don't know why. [Inaudible.]

MS. MCQUAID: Or Milton Sunday? Milton Sunday was —

MS. HERNMARCK: Milton Sunday refused to talk to me.

MS. MCQUAID: Why?

MS. HERNMARCK: He was tired of Swedish weaving.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, really?

MS. HERNMARCK: This was what I heard. I tried to see him several times. I'm — "We've had enough Swedish weaving." [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: That's so funny.

MS. HERNMARCK: Of course I had friends who were very friendly with him, but it didn't help. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: That's so funny. Well, he's —

MS. HERNMARCK: So he would not have been for it — [laughs] — or involved.

MS. MCQUAID: That's very funny.

MS. HERNMARCK: '77. I wonder what else. It was when I did — you know, that archive, that year is gone too, but I may have saved some — because I made — as I went through it, I saved some things —

MS. MCQUAID: Well, maybe for the next time — maybe you can —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, find out. Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: — because I'm — I would love to know, because I'm thinking of — I think it would be great to — I mean, we haven't had it out in a long time, and —

MS. HERNMARCK: But you deserve to own something better than that, I think.

MS. MCQUAID: I would love to own — you know which one I love? Because I love your *Folded Paper* [1988], and I see it in there.

MS. HERNMARCK: I have two of them. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: It's beautiful. But —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, that's interesting you say that, because I think they're some of the best things I've done.

MS. MCQUAID: I love it. When I saw it, I just said, "That's fantastic."

MS. HERNMARCK: And I have one in color, too, which is — same idea, with folds, but it's not the textured paper.

MS. MCQUAID: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] I love that. But I — but it's interesting, because I — I actually have a picture of it. I brought it with me.

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh — [inaudible].

MS. MCQUAID: And — because I'm curious — I was — one of the things that — this was probably a lousy picture, but one of the things that I was thinking is that we're doing a — doing an installation of Carnegie, the history of the Carnegie Mansion —

MS. HERNMARCK: Right.

MS. MCQUAID: — and I thought it would be so interesting to put objects from our collection that have to deal with the Carnegie Mansion.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: And this would be an ideal one.

MS. HERNMARCK: Let me see if I have the right colors here.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. I mean, this is from a Xerox —

MS. HERNMARCK: '77, yeah. No, I can find out something more about it. I can find out when we did it —

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, I would really love to know, and I think it would be great, because I — you know, as I mentioned to you, it would be wonderful to kind of have a link to these interviews from the Cooper-Hewitt website.

MS. HERNMARCK: You know, I may not even have a picture of it. I'm wondering. We may have missed — '78, that is —

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, it was — let me see. *Carnegie's Dream* — oh, actually, the date — the label's dated '78.

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh. Okay. Let's look a little farther, then.

MS. MCQUAID: And —

MS. HERNMARCK: Hm.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, it's a gift.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: That's all I know.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, I'll find out more about it.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: I have records I can look in.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay. Yeah. So —

MS. HERNMARCK: So let me mark here, because I'm — then I have something here which — I don't know — I was going to edit it a little bit — something I wrote in '95 and addressing myself to other people interested in commissioned tapestries and how I go about doing my commissions. It's —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, great.

MS. HERNMARCK: But I started reading and realized it needs to be — the language is a little klutzy up in here, so —

MS. MCQUAID: That's all right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: But just as — as just ideas, that's always —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: — it's great to get that.

Do you — what about Christa Thurman? Do you —

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh. Yes, she — I've had my battles with her. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Because I know she — she's so interested in this — in this — in tapestries, and she —

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh, yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: — didn't she have a big — or she went through this whole kind of preservation of what —

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh, well, sure, of the collection they have, yes.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: No, she has — actually, they have about six of my works, I think.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: And when I — I sort of promised Lotus that she will get most of the stuff that I had available, and then I talked to Christa, who says — Christa says, "I only want what has to do with Chicago." So I'm — I leaned towards making sure that she had what relates —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — which of course upset Lotus, who wanted everything. So it was a bit of a problem with the actual paperwork.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: I couldn't divide —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — I don't remember quite exactly how it ended up. But Chicago has a nice — because I've done interesting work in Chicago. So — that relate to Chicago. So that's — in other museum — no, the Art Institute is here. So this is what they have. They have my big Louis Sullivan [*Homage to Louis Sullivan*, 1986], because that one became homeless.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's right, that's right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes. And that happened because we had a collector who paid for it. The bank — the building went bankrupt, and so even though they had paid \$75,000 for the tapestry to hang in the lobby, the museum got it for 18[,000 dollars], because the bank was just willing to —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, just —

MS. HERNMARCK: — looking to get rid of it. So and —

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: But what I really want them to do is take care of the — they have the big sample of *Plan of Chicago* [1909 *Plan of Chicago Study*, 1987] —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: — but the tapestry itself needs a lot of help, and nobody's doing anything to rescue it, because — here it is —

MS. MCQUAID: What's wrong with it?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it needs — it's stretched. It has bubbles. You know, it's just badly mounted and badly lit.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: So it needs to be redone. And I've been after the owners, and they said, "Oh — "

MS. MCQUAID: Is it still here?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, but it looks horrible. And they say, "Oh, we don't have budget for that this year. We don't have budget for it next" — you know, it's just like pulling teeth. It is really like pulling teeth. This is also 400 square feet.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow. It's amazing when you see the people in front of it, to give it scale. I mean, that's huge.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, it's huge. And half of it was hanging up — no, I — no, I have — in a funny picture — it's hanging in the studio, half of it. So — no, I couldn't find — and then of course the other one I did for Chicago was this one called *Chicago Skyline* [1997]. So here, at —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: That's at the McCormick convention center. And here I used the pattern — making the sky look more cold.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's interesting.

MS. MCQUAID: It's beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: So I gave the study of this — she got that too. Let me see.

MS. MCQUAID: So where — is that in — at the Art Institute now?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Here's the study for it.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, it's beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. So they got that.

MS. MCQUAID: It's beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then they got the one that relates to this piece here. They got the study for that too, because that's also in Chicago.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Which looks like this here. [Winter Pond Study, 22 inches by 10 inches -HH]

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it's not as — this is tiny, small — [inaudible].

MS. MCQUAID: Mm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: You can certainly have that. [Referring to my booklest -HH]

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, I have — I have —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: You sent me one, which is fine. And I actually had one in the file.

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh.

MS. MCQUAID: I forgot that I had already — you sent me —

MS. HERNMARCK: But they have come out in two editions. This one has a few more pictures in it.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, really?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: Is this the one that you sent to me?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, it is.

MS. MCQUAID: Did you send me the newer edition?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay. Then I have it, because I have in your book. Or maybe this is it.

MS. HERNMARCK: And just —

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, this is probably it.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then there are some other things you didn't get yet. There's a story in *Fiberarts* — a very interesting article, because he who wrote it quoted *Found in Translation*. And it's — ["Found in Translation: The Life and Art of Helena Hernmarck." *Fiberarts*, (January/February 2000): 28-34.]

MS. MCQUAID: Lawrence Knowles

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, and it is — first of all, he describes totally the difference between Gobelins and my technique.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, good. Good.

MS. HERNMARCK: He's the one who's done that really well. And he talks about — that he couldn't understand why I did what I did, until he realized that I'm operating out of another language where the words exist for what I do, which doesn't exist in English, this business of tapestry maker and, you know, the tradition —

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — and the way it developed in Scandinavia, even from the Vikings, it — you know, it didn't even relate to the Gobelins weaving. It —

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

MS. HERNMARCK: — but it was weaving that was used inside to decorate.

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

MS. HERNMARCK: So I like that article a lot.

MS. MCQUAID: Was there any kind of utility, though? Was it —

MS. HERNMARCK: For them? Yeah. I mean —

MS. MCQUAID: I mean in terms of warmth —

MS. HERNMARCK: — the riya rugs were made first to be used in the bed —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — with the fuzzy side down, before people had sheets.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so they would have these signs against evil spirits woven in and so on — hourglasses.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So that's what that — Lilli Zickerman went and looked for those.

MS. MCQUAID: Huh.

MS. HERNMARCK: And the Viking pieces, of course, were hung — they were often hung when they had a special party or a special celebration. There's a tapestry called *Överhogdal tapet*, which is fabulous, in Sweden, that is made in the year 1000. And it was found stuffed into the — to stop draft in an old church.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my God.

MS. HERNMARCK: There were three separate parts to it, and it was just stuffed in the ceiling —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my God.

MS. HERNMARCK: — where it had lain for hundreds of years. And then they found it.

MS. MCQUAID: Unbelievable.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it's beautiful. So — [laughs] — I can show you a picture of it in the studio.

MS. MCQUAID: Incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so let me see. This is — I'll give you stuff that you can read, in English. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Great.

MS. HERNMARCK: This is the museum [Dalarnas Museum -HH] which got this tapestry, and they have written, in Swedish and English, why they made — and what the tapestry is, so —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, great. Oh, good.

MS. HERNMARCK: So this is in both.

MS. MCQUAID: Great.

MS. HERNMARCK: And here's a picture of it in place. They didn't — they published the catalogue before they could photograph it in place.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Oh, great.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that's how it just gives you an idea of the size.

MS. MCQUAID: Fantastic.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that you can have. And —

MS. MCQUAID: That'll be mine.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. And these are some good — this is a good picture of *Poppies* — shows the technique, how I've started to — I've found that when it's totally out of focus, I can use the pattern again.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: When it's so — like in that sky —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — it came sometimes to a pattern. But I cannot weave —

MS. MCQUAID: When —

MS. HERNMARCK: — express a flower using the treadled pattern —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — which in fact is a surface pattern.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that kills the whole notion of fooling the eye.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: But I could put it in the background. [Referring to *Poppies* -HH]

So here's another out of focus area.

MS. MCQUAID: Out of focus area.

MS. HERNMARCK: [Inaudible] — so that's that. And of course these are shown — and here's the blue — the mate is a *Bluebonnets*.

MS. MCQUAID: Mm. Yeah, yeah. It's beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: And Cleveland decided they would take both. So that was — first they all wanted only *Poppies*.

These postcards were made of the suite for the Time Warner. So they are published —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, yeah, the *Four Seasons*, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. But I'll give you these, because they're better prints.

MS. MCQUAID: Fantastic.

MS. HERNMARCK: But that was the developer who bought these.

MS. MCQUAID: So who was the developer?

MS. HERNMARCK: So he asked his own interior designer out of Miami to design the lobby. And so they designed this lobby, and they stuck my *Weyerhaeuser [Rainforest* tapestry - HH] into their presentation to show that we'll have something like a tapestry here. And that's how I got the job. It sold itself. [Laughs.] I didn't even know they were doing it.

MS. MCQUAID: That's so interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Isn't that interesting!

MS. HERNMARCK: And of course the owner had no idea about my level of skill and so on. So he was taken rather by surprise when he got these four — first he bought two, and then of course 9/11 had happened, so he couldn't sell his apartment in the two towers. That took several years before people wanted to buy an apartment in the tower.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So then he bought the second pair a year later. So — [laughs] —

MS. MCQUAID: So they changed them, according to the —

MS. HERNMARCK: Every three months, they change. Three are in a box.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: One is up. So if I ever had an exhibition in New York —

MS. MCQUAID: It's easy.

MS. HERNMARCK: — I could borrow three big pieces, just like that.

MS. MCQUAID: And how are they put up? Are they — is it Velcro?

MS. HERNMARCK: It's Velcro.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: It takes half an hour to change them.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. Incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. So — nice. Of course this is the one for the Swedish American Institute in — that's — here you see the — this is really a Swedish Symbol [*Folk Costume Details*].

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: And that's not hanging up yet. It's waiting for the building to be built.

MS. MCQUAID: And when did you do this?

MS. HERNMARCK: In 2007.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's fantastic. Oh, I love this.

MS. HERNMARCK: And the anonymous woman who paid for this — she was an anonymous benefactress who gave millions to the institute and paid for the tapestry and paid for a video — I have a video that's being made — and nobody ever knew who she was until she died in 2005. And now — her money is now a foundation that's more known about, and it is all of a sudden Minnesota's biggest foundation [Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies]. Nobody knew how much money she had. And she didn't even know it herself until she was 70 years old. It's a fantastic story. [Only using the interest in capital, not the capital -HH]

So my job — my next commission is to capture her spirit in a tapestry for their new building.

MS. MCQUAID: Mm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So that's a shoo-in, in a way.

MS. MCQUAID: That's amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: Of course I'm so positive about her anyway, and because she knew the woman who started the Minnesota Guild of Weavers, because this woman who paid for this, Margaret, she was born in 1920, and Hilma Berglund was born in the 1890s or — there's 30-year difference. And she was a Swedish-American who built — who designed a loom that was collapsible and traveled around the Midwest and taught people to weave — Swedish weaving, exactly what Milton was so tired of.

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: That's exactly what she was doing.

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So —

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So this connection, through the generations, you know — so now I'm weaving a tapestry — because Hilma was a weaver from Sweden, I'm weaving a tapestry of Margaret for her new foundation. It's interesting.

MS. MCQUAID: And the foundation is in Sweden or is it — will be in Minnesota?

MS. HERNMARCK: No, it's all American. And she was one of —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, it's all American.

MS. HERNMARCK: — she was of the Cargill family. She knew Hilma —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, Cargill Dow? Like Cargill Dow?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: But she didn't like her family or anything. She moved to California as a young woman, never married, never had children, and had this fortune that she only sort of started dealing with seriously when she was past 70. But it's \$2 billion.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my God.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it's all secret. Nobody — and it's — no one — they don't — you can't apply for grants. Nobody must approach them. They decide what she would have wanted. And she supported all the good things in life: the Humane Society, the Red Cross, the environment, the American Indian Museum. She paid for part of that.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, really?

MS. HERNMARCK: She loves [sic] crafts. She loves [sic] American Indian crafts. And she loved Sweden. She went to a lecture by Jack Larsen when she was quite elderly. Jack had no idea who he met. She never — he was never introduced. But I was told how she had turned on to his talk.

So I told Christa — I said, "Look, Jack — you know, Jack has a foundation" — [laughs] — now I'm beginning to think, you know, that there could be connections here. But you know, I'll do it carefully.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow. That's amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: It is amazing.

MS. MCQUAID: This is beautiful, though.

MS. HERNMARCK: I'm so pleased with it. Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: I love it.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, what is — so these are Swedish folk craft?

MS. HERNMARCK: They belong — yeah. You see, the American Swedish Institute is for Swedish-Americans. It's the biggest in the country. There's one in Chicago, one in Philadelphia, but this one is bigger.

And they have — when the immigrants got a little better off, they went back to Sweden and acquired these costumes. But when they were immigrants, they couldn't afford to have fine costumes. They left Sweden because they were starving. And — but as they became well-to-do — so they have a collection of these costumes.

So I said to them, "Look, I want a photograph in your collection." So I arrived with my camera and they were there with their white gloves, bringing everything out for me to see and hang up and shoot. But I knew about Hilma's friendship with the person paying for it. So this I included, because that is Hilma's handwriting.

MS. MCQUAID: What does it say? Oh — [Green walnut in copper pan soda -HH]

MS. HERNMARCK: On a recipe for dyeing yarn.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: So I found that, so I added it, you know, as just a little gesture, because I love this history.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: I love it all hanging together.

MS. MCQUAID: That's great.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: That's fantastic. So when — so you say this is installed? It's not —

MS. HERNMARCK: It's in the box. It's in the box. And it'll be in a box for another couple of years, probably. They haven't even started the building.

MS. MCQUAID: Who's building it?

MS. HERNMARCK: It's — the American Swedish Institute have slowly collected money —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh.

MS. HERNMARCK: — to make an addition, just like the Cooper-Hewitt. They just need more space.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: And when they have collected half the money for the building, they were able to buy the whole lot next door. So all the money went into that.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then they had to start all over again — [laughs] —

MS. MCQUAID: But you know, it's like — that's — it's probably far —

MS. HERNMARCK: But it saved them from having to build an underground garage and —

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, which is so expensive too.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: This is fantastic.

MS. HERNMARCK: But I will give you the video. You can see how it was made.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, yeah, I would love to.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: Of course that'll tell you a lot.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. All right. Well, maybe I should go to Niels.

MS. HERNMARCK: To Niels. Yes, I think you should.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: So —

[Audio break.]

MS. MCQUAID: Okay, this is — this is Matilda McQuaid conducting an interview. This is disc two with Helena Hernmarck. And we are at her studio in north Ridgefield, CT.

Okay. We've just looked at some gorgeous examples of her work. And on our last — when we last talked, you had mentioned to me that Sigrid Weltge's article was kind of the best article about you. ["Helena Hernmarck" *American Craft* 59, no. 6, (December 1999/January 2000): 38-43.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes. Yes.

MS. MCQUAID: And I really found it interesting in terms of the technique. And one of the thing[s] she says about your special tapestry construction, she describes it as a discontinuous plain weave on top of which you hand pick a supplementary pattern weft, according to a grid which at one end totally covers the plain weave —which is called soumak stitch? —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes.

MS. MCQUAID: — and allows it to become increasingly exposed. And so I wanted you to just kind of briefly explain how did this special tapestry construction develop. And when she says — when she says that it allows it to become increasingly exposed, is she talking about the yarn becomes more exposed?

MS. HERNMARCK: No, she's talking about the tabby background becomes more exposed.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: [inaudible] — well —

MS. MCQUAID: And is — I mean, is this type of construction present throughout most of your work?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, it is, because the soumak, which you lay on — which is floating on top, becomes dominant and hides the warp and tabby behind.

MS. MCQUAID: Right — the background.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it is the maximum white or the maximum dark that you can achieve.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: [Inaudible.]

MS. MCQUAID: So that's — when you refer to kind of the layering, I mean, you — that's sort of part of the layering.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes.

MS. MCQUAID: So that — the soumak becomes the top-most layer. And then underneath, how many layers do you usually have, like two other layers underneath?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it is — no. No, it's essentially only the tabby. But the tabby, yes, it becomes two layers, because I have a dark and a light half in the tabby. So even there I can roll up what I want to show and hide. And the trick is always to go as long as possible with one butterfly. That's quicker. That's what makes it quicker than Gobelins. So —

MS. MCQUAID: When you refer to butterfly, what do you mean by butterfly?

MS. HERNMARCK: It's this bundle — it's the bundle that we create that is the color. [Inaudible.]

MS. MCQUAID: Okay, that you — Okay. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so you can have a lot of different colors make — makes up one bundle. So what you do is, you go — as long as you change the thread here and there, continues to —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right. Which I've — when I was watching the DVD about the making of the *Folk Costume Details* —

MS. HERNMARCK: *Folk Costume Details*?

MS. MCQUAID: — I just found it — it was fascinating to watch you work and — at the studio in Sweden, at the Alice Lund studio. But then also, I was thinking about it, and in reading some of the documents about how you work, I know there's like this constant communication between you and the studio about — because you're not there the whole time that the tapestry's being woven —

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

MS. MCQUAID: — but these weavers, obviously, you've trained them and worked with them for many years, so they understand your technique. But still, how — it's almost like having, you know — I mean, they're almost like a prosthetic. And how do you — how does that work? I mean, how does it — I mean, how do you develop a trust in these weavers that they're going to do what you want? Is it — how much of a sort of — I mean, how much of it

is — do they kind of contribute to the — to the project? I mean, how does the working process work between you and them?

MS. HERNMARCK: [Laughs.] Well, my — what I make sure is that they — that it's fun for them. It's got to be fun for them. So I can't dictate.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: All I can do is hand them a technique with some different ways of doing things. But in terms of the interpretation, what's in tabby and what's in pattern and how long and other ways to reverse the order — that is what they decide.

MS. MCQUAID: Right

MS. HERNMARCK: And it works, because we've worked together for so many years. But even in the early days, well, the first few that were done were maybe simpler so that they could warm up. The weaver who worked with me most continuously all these years has just retired, and she's 67 now.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And her limbs got worn out from weaving all her life. But Ebba [Bergström] who is now 52, has been along continuously since '97 and was also on the job in '84. She came back. And so they know my technique inside out.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: But it's very interesting to observe, because at one point, another artist asked if he could use my technique to do his work through them.

MS. MCQUAID: Interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because this is a skill they have, and it makes their business more viable.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So I said, at that point, I was wise enough not to be worried about that. So I said, sure, go ahead. And it didn't turn out at all as good as my stuff. [Laughs.] He hadn't designed it to use my technique.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. That's very interesting. He didn't — he didn't have the kind of comprehension of what — of the depth of the technique?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, no. And he also didn't know how to encourage the right things. Also, his design wasn't made for — with the technique in mind. But I find that you can tell when they have not had a comfortable relationship with the artist. That shows up. And so the biggest challenge of all is to step back. And — but this has worked like a charm.

MS. MCQUAID: No, that's fantastic. That speaks well of you as kind of an artist and sort of allowing that kind of, you know, freedom for them.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, you know, it's human nature. You've got to think it's fun, you've got to think it's your thing, and that you can't be an overbearing hysterical person who keeps saying, that's wrong, that's wrong. [Laughs.] That has happened.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: You know, it just puts everybody in a bad spot. It's better to say what's right.

MS. MCQUAID: So in terms of the technique, I mean, how do you know — I know it's become intuitive —

MS. HERNMARCK: Here you see this has worked so well with them — Xerox, that it almost looks like it's a Xerox.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, no, it's incredible. And this is the QE2.

MS. HERNMARCK: QE2.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: I don't know what's in this book; it's sort of a throw-together of stuff that I've had for my class.

It's interesting, you know, how you can have the illusion of form in the — in a flat way, the shadows, and how the light falls on the form. That's what you look at. You don't look at what is — you know, you know what it is; it's a sphere or —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, a pyramid or —

MS. HERNMARCK: But mostly, you're always, in the weaving, looking for what's light, what's dark —

MS. MCQUAID: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: — what's light, what's dark, and where am I in the design? Because the design that they hold is small, but the blow-up is full scale under the warp.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So they have to take it out of the loom, now and then, to draw on it, to remind themselves of the scale.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So I've got some good pictures.

MS. MCQUAID: They take — they take the design out of the loom?

MS. HERNMARCK: They take the paper that's under —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, out of the loom. Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. And so you have to be very careful where you put the safety pins so that you don't let slip it. Because if you're in the middle of somebody's face it can be —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, totally a disaster.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. But if it's a landscape, it usually doesn't matter so much.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right. So in terms of — how do you balance the soumak stitch with the rest of it? I mean, does that — when I'm looking at say the —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it's just what you need. Let me see if I have a detail on that.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, like the *Poppies*. I mean, how —

MS. HERNMARCK: Maybe — here, this is a good one — you can look at it as plainweave looks flat.

[Audio break.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, now, but in that one, I sort of changed my mind halfway through. So, sure, this is more evenly done.

Of course, it is funny how much you can play with it. And it's the fact — and this I really say — it's the fact that you change your mind a lot that makes it beautiful. And that's why it's good not to use a computer, because a computer is far too predictable.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And you want it to be — you want to play with it.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So —

MS. MCQUAID: And how did this — how did the soumak stitch — I mean, how did that — how did you come to use it?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, you see, this is how — this is how it started. This is rosepath. And rosepath is a stitch that takes a longer step over some warp threads. And the tabby is always a tight weave.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it — so it covers. And here it has an uneven look because I made a mistake in the threading on purpose, to make these forms not to look too repetitive.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

Well, it isn't a very long step from this to start covering a big area.

MS. MCQUAID: I see. Yes.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that's really what it was.

MS. MCQUAID: Interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because it all started with that in those earlier abstract works I did.

MS. MCQUAID: So then you coined it "soumak stitch"?

MS. HERNMARCK: No, no. It's — soumak is a well-known supplementary weft.

MS. MCQUAID: It's well-known.

MS. HERNMARCK: All I've done is combine rosepath, discontinuous tabby, or plainweave, and soumak.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: That's what I've done.

MS. MCQUAID: So the combination.

MS. HERNMARCK: And let me look at this picture of Jack's — I mean he bought the one with the boy. To begin with, it was — [*Talking Trudeau-Nixon*, 1969.]

[Audio break.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Have you seen Jack's show at the craft museum? [Jack Lenor Larsen, Museum of Arts and Design.]

MS. MCQUAID: Yes. Yes, yup.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, I cut it into three parts. First, it was one part, for the Lausanne Biennale.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: But then I cut it into three when Nixon got in such disrepute. [Laughs.]

But this is what I mean. You see the line there?

MS. MCQUAID: Yes.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, what I changed there was, I actually went from black and white to start to using some gray.

MS. MCQUAID: Ah.

MS. HERNMARCK: But — which is a very sudden break in the whole thing. But does it matter? No.

MS. MCQUAID: It's just beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: So — and here you see the soumak is making his nose — reflecting the light. Down here, it's also in the tabby, the white. But here the gray is behind. No, this is a nice piece — very simple. Because, you know, in the '60s, in Montreal, it was Pop Art. It was what you were intrigued by. And I was intrigued by taking a very traditional, very pompous and serious technique and lightening it up a bit — not excessively, but, you know, it would be a picture of Little Richard.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So — my *Little Richard* tapestry is lost, but here he is in front of it. When they — when he — that was last time I saw it.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my God!

MS. HERNMARCK: And I hung it on the curtain. He —

MS. MCQUAID: So was this for him?

MS. HERNMARCK: No, it was — I had promised it to the Lausanne Biennale — when this happened. But I realized he was coming to give a concert in this theater in Montreal, so I said, "Heck, I'm going to hang up my tapestry on the black curtain." So they let me do that. And it's so funny, because he called it a knitting. I mean, what does he know about — [laughs].

MS. MCQUAID: Obviously not much.

MS. HERNMARCK: And he also thought that it was a gift from a fan. He couldn't tell, you know, that it was worth much money to me.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: So when he said that — and the — this as such a weird event. [Phone rings]. Let me just get it.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay, sure.

[Audio break.]

MS. MCQUAID: The Zorn Museum?

MS. HERNMARCK: Zorn, Anders Zorn.

MS. MCQUAID: Ah!

MS. HERNMARCK: Do you know that painter — Swedish painter?

MS. MCQUAID: No, but —

MS. HERNMARCK: He painted three American presidents.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, wow!

MS. HERNMARCK: He came to America 11 times, I think; good friend of Isabella [Stewart Gardner] —

[Audio break.]

MS. HERNMARCK: What had happened was that on this very night, which was pouring with rain, they had found the murdered politician, Pierre Laporte, who had been kidnapped and murdered in Quebec —

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: — or in Montreal. And it was the very first kidnapping that you ever heard of in Canada.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so the night that he had been found dead, there were 25 people in the audience, and he [Little Richard -HH] still put on the show.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my God.

MS. HERNMARCK: And he had a terrible cold; that was the other thing. So he said, "I'm going to —" he said, "I'm going to take it to the Johnny Carson show tomorrow. I'm going on Johnny Carson tomorrow. I'm going to take this with me." So I went backstage and talked to his younger brother, and I said, "Look, I promised this to an exhibition in Switzerland. [Laughter.] "I — he can't just take — as long as I get it back." Well, I never got it back.

MS. MCQUAID: You never got it back?

MS. HERNMARCK: It's still — no, it's still floating around somewhere. [Laughs.] And in 1995, I gave my — I had a class at RISD, and into — here is with *Nixon and Trudeau*. You see how it looks?

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: We'll go back to *Little Richard*. That's me in front of it — so — [laughs].

MS. MCQUAID: How great! You look so mod.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, I sure was. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: So mod.

MS. HERNMARCK: My little hot pants — [laughs] — and my shoes.

MS. MCQUAID: Beautiful. Beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: I've still got the shirt and the vest and the hot pants. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's so fantastic.

MS. HERNMARCK: Maybe I'll give it to FIT. [Laughter.] Anyhow, so there's no — also, some years later, a friend of mine in music — meanwhile, I'd been calling Little Richard's mother, several times — I mean, this is really funny — trying to explain what I was talking about.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And his manager, Bumps Blackwell — I was on the phone with him. But I got nowhere. So finally, a friend of mine in the music business talked to him, like, two years later; tracked him down to a motel somewhere. And he said, "Oh, oh, that was in a rental limo — car, I don't know." He hadn't gone on Johnny Carson because of his illness, because he was sick. And then the car had been rented and the — so as far as he was concerned, he didn't know where it was. So in 1995 — which is now how many years later? From '71 to '95.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my God, 24 —

MS. HERNMARCK: A guy walks into — at RISD, at the end of winter session, we hung everybody's work on the wall and made a little exhibition. And in walks this tall black guy, who says, "Oh, you're the one who wove *Little Richard*." So I said, "What do you know about that?" [Laughs.] "Oh, I saw it." "Where? When?" "Ah, 15 years ago, in a gallery — I don't know." So —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my — so it exists.

MS. HERNMARCK: It exists. And now, with the Internet, somebody's told me I should just go and ask for it on the

Internet.

MS. MCQUAID: That's amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: Maybe I should.

MS. MCQUAID: Maybe you should.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. [Laughs.] Because here — let me go back to —

MS. MCQUAID: That is so interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it's interesting in that I so often interacted with the real world.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: That's the —

MS. MCQUAID: And how many — I mean, before *Little Richard*, how many kind of pop —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, he was the first, because I was still living in Montreal and I had done — '71, let's see, in which order? I had done, of course, George Washington's face on the dollar bill. [*George Washington, Study for Dollar Bill*, 1967.]

MS. MCQUAID: Right, the bill, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And I thought, well, I was —

MS. MCQUAID: That was — was that your first one?

MS. HERNMARCK: Of a face, yes.

MS. MCQUAID: I think that — yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. And it was on the dollar bill. It wasn't a photograph, but it still had the three-dimensional look. No, I didn't have any work, and I was thinking I'd make an exhibition. And I was so interested in the rock stars from the '50s who'd started it all, so I had the plan to do it. And I'd gone and collected photographs of

Chuck Berry and Little Richard and Elvis and, you know, Bill Haley and so on. I was going to weave a suite of those guys. But by the time this was done, which was the first, I got some real work. And then it rolled on, and I never got back to it.

And I created it to look like an album — an Otis Redding album that had this — I sort of copied the lettering from an Otis Redding album.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, how interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then I wove in all the best songs here: "Long Tall Sally," "Send Me Some Lovin'", "Good Golly Miss Molly."

MS. MCQUAID: How interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: And the Specialty label. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: That's great.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it was fun. But I mean, in those days in Montreal we would get — he came to the theater. Someone like Fats Domino was performing in a — in a sort of low-down bar, you know. We'd go and listen to him. And, you know, Chuck Berry came to town — and James Brown. And when he came to town, he had his band with him. And my then-husband, Michael [Maconochie], liked these guys so much he invited them home for dinner. James Brown's band came home for dinner. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.] That's incredible!

MS. HERNMARCK: And we cooked the steaks for these guys, and they just poured the salt on them. [Laughs.] I couldn't believe —

MS. MCQUAID: That's incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then I got post — the drummer in James Brown's band wrote me post cards for some years afterwards, because he was so taken by the looms and everything — [laughs] — never seen anything like it.

MS. MCQUAID: That's incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: So you were — so, I mean, is it — do you think music had more of a kind of impact on these sort

of formative years than —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, I think so.

MS. MCQUAID: — some of the other kind of visual artists that were — you know, that you may have been contemporaries with?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, I do think so, because we were having such fun listening to the music all day long. I mean, it energized us endlessly, you know. It was — it was great fun, those years.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: So, yes, I think in — one can say that. And then, you know, just from the Swedish perspective, I mean, the old folks still alive back home who believed in the modern aesthetics and all that, they thought I had lost my mind, of course, doing this stuff. "How can she?" and "How awful!" They sounded just like I sound now. [Laughter.]

MS. MCQUAID: That's so interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Yeah, it is.

MS. MCQUAID: Well, I mean, on that note, I had, you know, a question, you know, why you think your work — how — well, why do you think your work was so well received by, you know, kind of an American public, I mean, or was it? Was it any different between America and Sweden? I mean, you came here; you worked hard at developing a client base. Why — and I know — I know we touched on this a little bit in the first interview, about, you know, this is — you felt that America was where things were happening. But what do you think about the kind of American character? Sort of, why did it accept your work maybe more than, say, other places?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, you know, there are two things. One, of course, was that the architects that I met were steeped in Scandinavian modern, Swedish modern. And, you know, they loved that. That's what they had loved when they went to school. So that when I appeared on the scene, they thought I was going to be 80 years old. So there I am, appearing with my afro and my miniskirt, and they say, "What is this? Is she going to weave tapestry?" [Laughter.] But then, they soon figured out that I was serious; I was going to weave tapestries.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Very interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so I remember Stanley Tigerman taking me to lunch in Chicago. And I was wearing a miniskirt and we — they wouldn't let me into the restaurant, because it was before that had been accepted. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: That's so funny.

MS. HERNMARCK: No — but they thought I — they thought of Anni Albers when they first heard about me.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. That's very —

MS. HERNMARCK: So my youth, of course, made a difference. And the other thing was, why I met an audience — what was I going to say? Of course, I went, you know — it's not as if I made them hard to understand, either, I felt. But I think it was the graphic design of the time that influenced me visually a lot. And this enlarging — people hadn't done much of that. And of course, when you enlarge things, then it becomes something else.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And the clients, of course, would take the advice from the architect. That was the other thing. If the architect said, "This, I want this. This looks good" —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, then they would listen.

MS. HERNMARCK: — then they would trust that, because they had hired the architect, and they listened. And the whole thing only fell apart in the early '90s, after the big growth of architectural offices in the '80s. And they had gone so big, and then it just collapsed. And as far as I was concerned, what happened was that the name architect, who would have had a whole skyscraper to design — suddenly, the client realized they could save money if the name architect only did 10 percent of the building — the form, the roof, and the lobby — and all the floors in between were drawn up by a cheaper —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so that original architect was able to change a door handle on 50 floors, and pay for the tapestry. So that disappeared.

And the interior designers would never bother with me very much, because they would normally have a budget to do a job —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — and a tapestry would have taken too big a part of that budget.

MS. MCQUAID: So they didn't want you.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Yeah. Now I remember the *Little Richard* thing. The *Penniman News*, which was his fan magazine out of England —

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: — they wrote about me, and they said that the tapestry was in fact worth \$12,000 — which it was to me at the time. [Laughter.]

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it also got into *Time* magazine, the Canadian version of *Time*, *Little Richard*.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, really?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, it was in there. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Incredible. That's a great story.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it's published in the book, where it says "whereabouts unknown," which is still true. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, that's a good idea, in terms of trying to reach out via the Internet to see if it can't be tracked.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: Obviously, someone has it that is —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: It's being cared for in some way, hopefully.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes. I think — I think that's a —

MS. MCQUAID: And it's signed, right?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Oh, yeah, it's — it says, actually, my initials here and the year — HBH, 1969. Well, that's a good reason to have good photographs.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. Absolutely. But where is it?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. So this was published in a Montreal newspaper. So here I got people calling me, wanting to take me out for dates. [Laughter.] "I like your legs." [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.] I know. It's a great — you look — well, you look so fabulous. You could be a model.

MS. HERNMARCK: [Laughs.] Thanks. And there's *Little Richard*, and here's *Trudeau-Nixon*, which I like a lot — very grainy, very — you know, like a newspaper — 1969. And it went to the Lausanne Biennale. And I did it as a protest over the fact that they only published their catalogues in black and white. So I said, "If you're going to publish my picture, I might as well weave it black and white." So that was my — [laughs] —

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.] Very good. Very good.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, but I was never a big hit at the Lausanne, because just as I was getting into this, they were taking off into three-dimension and, you know, Connie and Jack were moving into —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — the liberation from the loom.

MS. MCQUAID: Of the — yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: And people would say to me, "Aren't you liberated yet?" [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, I actually wanted to ask you about that in terms of, you know, the — your contemporaries who kind of went that way, and you sort of stayed very much —

MS. HERNMARCK: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: — sort of attached to this technique. How did that — how did that affect relationships, or not? Maybe it was just — it was just kind of your different paths, but —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, you know, my peers that I admire, like Micheline Beauchemin in Canada — she was a fine artist in the background. She worked in other materials, too. She wasn't just married to textiles. Mariette Vermette Rousseau [sic — Mariette Rousseau-Vermette], I didn't like that much. But she, of course, is the background of Tom Grotta and his whole—she was a best friend of his parents.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So in terms of Americans, Adela Akers I think was already around. There were some people I liked, but I never felt like following the trend. I also — it was sort of amusing that I was always going in the opposite direction. But Connie had that show at MoMA —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — called wall —

MS. MCQUAID: "Wall Hangings."

MS. HERNMARCK: "Wall Hangings" [February 25 — May 4, 1969]. I had been accepted on my plastic abstract work.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: But when they wrote us, said, "Time to send your piece," that was in '68, and I had — then had four commissions. I'd completely forgotten about it. I'd done the QE2, the Strand Palace, the Sweden House and the Habitat [67] — four.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my gosh.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so I — and all realistic. And they had said, "No figurative." And I was — so I didn't feel like turning back at that point. I suppose it's good and bad to stay on your own path. It took me years to understand that it was dumb of me not to, for example, seek more grants.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Because I went, "Heck, I don't need a grant. I'm making my money," you know.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: I never realized — from my Swedish background, I never realized that there was such a division in America between commercial art and fine art. And working with clients tainted you to be a commercial artist, and you just weren't in the — in the other league.

MS. MCQUAID: But did you feel that way as a practice?

MS. HERNMARCK: I never felt it, because it never occurred to me.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Until much later. And Molly Fletcher kept saying to me, "Look, why don't you — it's good to apply for a grant and get it." And I dismissed it for years. I didn't do that until the '90s.

MS. MCQUAID: Well, if — say, if you had gotten a grant for \$50,000, what would you have done differently, do you think?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, that's what I wonder, too, because I was so stimulated by the commissions.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: The commissions were fun to do.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: Because it was a need, and you were going to see it up, and there were going to be unveilings, and it was going to be in the papers —

MS. MCQUAID: It sounds like, you know, they gave you — I mean, I don't know, I'd be interested. Maybe you can explain a little bit more about, you know, the parameters that you had, that they gave you.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, if they gave you a space and you just had to — you know, you came up with a sketch?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: If they had very specific things that you needed to abide by?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, you — it varied, I mean, but — it varied, but they often had a preconceived idea. But I knew that I was dealing with mostly visually illiterate people, businesspeople.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so if they had a preconceived idea, then I had to take them out of that and persuade, and I managed. Before computers, I learned to — if there was a model built for the — if it was a spec building, that they needed to sell the spaces before they built it, then they made a beautiful model. So I put my design in the model —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — and took pictures of it in the models. When I showed it, it looked real, you know, it looked like a —

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that was useful. But mostly, to work with these architects, it was a challenge, and it meant you were part of a bigger picture, somehow.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So I didn't — although I knew I should carry on exhibitions alongside — I did have them, though. I had in Sweden and Denmark I was — and L.A., L.A. County and — MoMA in '73, L.A. County in '74, Nationalmuseum in Stockholm in '76, and then the Danish museum, '77. So it —

MS. MCQUAID: When was your first — what was the first important exhibition you had?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it was MoMA.

MS. MCQUAID: MoMA?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. It was amazing, 1973.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: But it was because Philip Johnson sent me to Arthur Drexler. I went — and Philip — I told you about the first time I met him, right?

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right, and the smelling salts, right. [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, right. Well, the second time I came around, I had pictures of the *Rainforest* for Weyerhaeuser. And he didn't even connect that that was the same person, I don't think, because he just —

MS. MCQUAID: He fell in love, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. So the Weyerhaeuser job was really something. And that only happened because I'd come through in '72 and visited those 124 offices, I'd come through San Francisco.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, what — I mean, what fortitude you had.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, you know, I didn't — it was — hit me that I was doing anything extraordinary; I was just basically having fun. [Laughs.] It's amazing.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. Yes.

MS. HERNMARCK: But of course, I was not afraid, you know. And I think that's my background, too. My father was from a museum; my uncle was an architect. I wasn't shy about appearing like that.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So that was very fortunate.

MS. MCQUAID: I wanted you to just kind of describe your sort of ideal work environment. We kind of touched on this with Niels. I mean, he sort of described it, but I want you in your — sort of your own words, too, to describe how you work and, you know, what are kind of the conditions you like to work under. You have this amazing studio that — and now — and I know this was sort of carefully thought out by you with Niels.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: And I can see sort of aspects of this studio in pictures of the Alice Lund Textile Studio, too.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: So I'm just curious, like, what is it — can you describe this place that you work — where you work? And, you know, what are the ideal conditions to work under?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, obviously, here I have this wonderful high space. It's — I can look — my walls are 14 feet up to the roof.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it's a huge space, and I can — I have a place to hang things and I have a place for my looms. And of course, the yarn wall is — Niels always — he did the same with the loft. He put it to be the first thing you see when you walk in the front door. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: It's amazing. This — there's just this wall filled with color.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: It's really — I mean, it's like you don't even want to —

MS. HERNMARCK: [Laughs.] Well —

MS. MCQUAID: It looks like an art installation. [Laughter.] It doesn't look like a working —

MS. HERNMARCK: No.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, it's just beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, you see, that's it. The material is so beautiful, in itself.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] The colors.

MS. HERNMARCK: So how can you resist? But of course, there's no — nowhere in the world is there such a wall. I mean, I'm the only one — it's really odd to say this, but most yarn stores don't have half of what I've got, or schools for that matter, because I've got — I got used to going — to dyeing and spinning the yarn for each job.

MS. MCQUAID: So this — so these colors that you have here, are they — are they colors left over from other jobs?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, uh-huh. They're mostly left over, yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: And do you ever — and you use these in future jobs? Or do —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes. Oh, sure.

MS. MCQUAID: Yes.

MS. HERNMARCK: Whatever I did to something else ends up in the next and the next.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Right. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that when you hang up an exhibition with all these different styles — you know, I've got five or six different styles of weaving which I've actually — in this book here, I went through it. This is done in '89, so it's a while back. But I went through — 1989 — watercolor designs, calligraphy — so I've divided up my kind of different — I don't know where the overall list is. But then I have — then so I've written that, and then I show examples of what techniques have used that.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: And then photorealism — and what was that?

MS. MCQUAID: I was reading somewhere where — do you describe your work as photorealistic, or do you — or there was something about surreal — photosurrealist —

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, here — yeah, here I do, but later on, I realized that it's actually — I started calling it superrealism.

MS. MCQUAID: Superrealism.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. But photorealism is not bad, abstracted photorealism.

MS. MCQUAID: And what is superrealism? Can you explain that?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it would be — it's simply that it's — that it's very large-scale, and that it's realistic.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] So it's returning to — it's referring to scale more than —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Yes, and the fact that it's abstract close-up.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: And so, you know, that's why we work with binoculars, backwards, so we can reduce what we see.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, which I love that.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: I love seeing that. What a great — great use.

MS. HERNMARCK: So here's the double-sided translucent, miscellaneous. But I think I must be missing some things here. Trompe l'oeil, of course — yeah, that's the most trompe l'oeil work.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. Yeah, that's incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: And even this, which is the *Swedish Coat of Arms* [1969], which I made for the embassy in London — but, yes.

MS. MCQUAID: That *Urn* [1990] is amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. And that was woven by Britt-Marie in Sweden, you see? I — she did it. She did it. And it was actually not too hard to do, because there was not so many color changes all the time.

MS. MCQUAID: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: So it was a little quicker. [Pause.] No, so I don't know what got me going on that all of a sudden, but —

MS. MCQUAID: Well, no, that's —

MS. HERNMARCK: There was some abstract — you know, I occasionally get the opportunity to do an abstract, and this was for Fidelity Investments. This was my —

MS. MCQUAID: And do they tell you they want an abstract or do you — or do you suggest it?

MS. HERNMARCK: No, it was the budget . The architect said, "I want something 800 square feet, but we don't have that much money." So the answer to that is: Well, in that case, it's going to be abstract. [Laughs.] Because it was going to be 11 feet by 80 [feet].

MS. MCQUAID: Wow. Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that — and then it was going to hang on this curved wall. So one of the photographs here, which is — which is fun, is — that that's the wool that made it, before we spun it.

MS. MCQUAID: Incredible! How much — how many pounds of it is that?

MS. HERNMARCK: 600 pounds.

MS. MCQUAID: 600 pounds.

MS. HERNMARCK: I don't know how many sheep. So I called them —

MS. MCQUAID: That was just — it was so great to see that, the whole process of dyeing, the shearing from —

MS. HERNMARCK: Isn't it? Yes.

MS. MCQUAID: Everything in that DVD, it was just — it was wonderful.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Well, you see, I think I really almost threw my clients when I started talking about, it's from the back of the sheep that the wool has to come, not from the stomach. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: You want to eat lunch?

[Audio break.]

MS. HERNMARCK: [In progress] — this photograph. And so interestingly enough, I told these guys, the spinners and dyers, as soon as I heard about these jobs, I want — start saving white wool for me, because I'm doing bright colors and I need pure — the purest white —

MS. MCQUAID: Purest white.

MS. HERNMARCK: — which you can get — it's not all pure white —

And next day I called my brother, who is a preschool teacher in northern Sweden. And he says, "I hear you have a new job."

I said, how'd you know — [laughs]. Well, it turned out the guy in that preschool, who was a friend of his, had some of these sheep. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: That is so funny.

MS. HERNMARCK: But this is something that I enjoy so much, is that this — you drop a rock and all these ripples way out.

MS. MCQUAID: You have the ripples effect.

MS. HERNMARCK: I just love it. So —

MS. MCQUAID: That's extraordinary.

MS. HERNMARCK: So this is what it looked like in the loom, the height. It's just the height. And this is two-thirds of it laid out on the floor. Here's [roller ?] one-third. Here's the whole thing laid out in my old school — and people are coming to see it.

MS. MCQUAID: Incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then we laid it out. And here's my two weavers and me. Ah! [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: How much of a surprise — because your work is so large, how much of a surprise is it when you finally see the completed piece?

MS. HERNMARCK: Oh, it's —

MS. MCQUAID: Is it like a total revelation?

MS. HERNMARCK: It's great. It looks so very colorful — the way paint does on paper. You know, it's great.

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, it must be — I mean, it's huge.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's a wonderful feeling. And you see things that you didn't know was going to happen, of course. But on the whole, when I weave something here, when we first roll it out, you almost can't see it. You've

been so involved. You have to put it aside for a week and then you can have a better feeling for what it is.

MS. MCQUAID: Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: I love this one, the size — [inaudible].

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, I love this one.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: It's just incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: Here it is arriving in the lobby, so it's photographing. And then the lifts — you know, it took forever to get it out. And it's all Velcro, all along the top, because it's a curved wall.

MS. MCQUAID: It's curved, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. So it had — and this was a model — this was my design in a — in a model.

MS. MCQUAID: Ah.

MS. HERNMARCK: And this was such fun because when I came to Boston to make my presentation — and so the architect had the model, so we were meeting in this room. And I had several different ones to try in the model. And just as we start, in walks Ned Johnson [Edward Crosby Johnson III], who owns Fidelity, rolled up his sleeves and he went right in and he was trying them, so it was fun, you know.

MS. MCQUAID: That's great. And when they get — when they get —

MS. HERNMARCK: And he picked the one I wanted. [Laughs.] He even picked the one I wanted.

MS. MCQUAID: No, when they get involved in the process, that's when you know you've struck a chord.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: Fantastic.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then — [laughs] — to get this shot — this is South Boston, near the World Trade Center in Boston. To get this shot, we went up in the Federal Reserve Bank, which is on Atlantic Avenue, which is six blocks away. And because I have a piece at the Federal Reserve [*Sailing*, 1976], they love me there, so me and my photographer could run between the floors to find out the best angle to shoot across six blocks to get this picture. And he had rented a lens that was this big — it cost \$300 to lens — to rent.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, my God. Incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: But you know, I just think it's fun to do — to do things like that.

MS. MCQUAID: That's incredible. That's amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: Great shot.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's nice. So, you know, the photographer is a big part of that.

MS. MCQUAID: No, yeah, it is. I mean, from — you know, from the documentation to the very beginning of it, where, you know, some of that process begins.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Maybe we should go up and eat.

MS. MCQUAID: O.K.

[Audio break.]

MS. MCQUAID: Maybe we can talk about how you keep track of where you are in terms of working. Now, does — this chart that you're showing me, did this come out — you would have done this regardless of whether you — most of your work is being done in Sweden or not, correct? I mean, is this — is this —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Well —

MS. MCQUAID: Or is this — is — did this come out of sort of working long-distance?

MS. HERNMARCK: No, this is something that I had learned from the beginning. My first husband, who was an engineer, got me going on it, actually. And the difference is, first of all, it's only recently that most of my work is done in Sweden. Most of the time in the past I had assistants in the studio, and we were talking about — I miss them here. So I have to do something about that because for 14 years I had two people working here that were very productive. And that was Hanna [Tsao] and Molly Wensberg. And so then — this was done after Molly's time, but we were no less than four: Britt-Marie, a Swedish friend [Wendy Moran, Phyllis -HH], and PT [phonetic] — and that's Hanna — so some people —

MS. MCQUAID: And what work is this chart for?

MS. HERNMARCK: This is for the tapestry with the horse on it [*Overbrook*, 2001]. And it's the one we actually — it took us 3,700 hours to make it.

MS. MCQUAID: Three thousand seven hundred hours.

MS. HERNMARCK: And that's what you see here. You see all the — all the — every hour that was spent is listed here.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: So that's — and then towards the end I got in it for — you see this column here? It shows that I worked every day nonstop all this time.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow. Oh my gosh.

MS. HERNMARCK: So — and then people came and went.

MS. MCQUAID: So it starts from the bottom and work — goes up?

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, mm-hmm. So this is the length of the tapestry, and these are the days. So every day we fill in where we are. It's the opposite to an economic curve because the more low it goes, the faster we're weaving. The more up, the slower it is. So it's actually 14 feet — what was the — 11 foot — 12 foot. It goes to 20 foot here. So — and then these are the months, you know, February, March, April, May and June. And all this is the finishing work. That's tying knots. Molly [Wensberg] and I pulled out tabby. Lucia Kim [phonetic] came to look. That's — was the mother of one of my weavers. Top end sewn in, three hours, started — [laughs] — Molly and I did the label. So everything is — that is done is listed.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow. That's amazing. What a great tool. I mean, a great document.

MS. HERNMARCK: And I have these for everything I've done. So I've got them going back — actually, I really have them organized — it's actually from the early '70s.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: So I can go back every year, any month and see what we were doing.

MS. MCQUAID: That's incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: That's a very great, interesting archive, which is going to end up in Minneapolis.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. That's incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it's the actual work. [Teaching workshops -HH] So — and I had this pulled out as an example. I copied it from my students because — here's some stuff that I showed my students because — I also show pictures like that because we were weaving black and white. This, of course, is in color. That's the design, and that's the tapestry. But it's to show them examples. But then this is how they practice. First, they learn to do just some basic rosepath and picking the pattern. Each one has done their own here. And then I make them go from light to dark. That's something that everyone has to practice. This is the class at Haystack, where we had three weeks. So we did it in color, that class. Two-week classes I always started with black and white, and then if they want, come back — we do another two weeks in color. So this — and this is detail of the beech tree out here. Everyone did a piece, and each one's was pretty abstract. But when you put them together, you —

MS. MCQUAID: You see the tree. Very interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. And then this is them practicing the — I love this. This was a beginner. Do you see that

guy? He's walking with a bicycle.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah. That's fantastic.

MS. HERNMARCK: It's so great. And this was Tomoko Takahashi, who wanted to learn my technique and moved from Japan to Sweden to work with the Swedish weavers. And she had been there before learning Swedish and going —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, she's the one in the studio now, right? Or no, no, who was the —

MS. HERNMARCK: She was — yeah, she was in the studio in here. Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: No, she's had to move back to Japan. So she's no longer doing it.

These are some of my beginners. This is actually a surfer. And I think —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, yes.

MS. HERNMARCK: And I come to the conclusion that it's almost better when you're not that good because it becomes more of a — more accidents are allowed in, and it's more of a struggle.

MS. MCQUAID: You're not unlearning anything that you've done before, and you haven't — kind of —

MS. HERNMARCK: No, and there's more tension in it. So I think — this one intrigues me a lot. This was Tomoko's first, and I mean, talking about catching the light and the shadows just right. So here was this — when we put it up, the whole thing. All this — it's a vine. It's a wall of vines. It was a little difficult to do because all the points were hard for them to achieve. This is one I use as a beginner design, like this.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, because it's all — wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, which is just this detail. But that's a very good thing to practice on to begin to understand how to make it look —

MS. MCQUAID: Light and dark, and the shadows and —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. So I've had — I use this in more than one class, right, for different people because I've given one in Denmark and Haystack once; RISD I was at two winter sessions in the mid-'90s. But then I was really learning how to do — but that was the best, when you had two days a week for six weeks. It's much better than the continuous because it's so hard to absorb it all fast.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, I know, and — yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: So it — so —

MS. MCQUAID: But also sometimes the intensity. I mean, just like, as you work every day on your tapestry, you kind of get into this sort of groove, and you — a rhythm. And —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. And that is good, the rhythm. This is the one they produced at Haystack. It's a bit of a fuzzy — but it's a reflection. It's a bush reflecting in water. I think there was another picture of it somewhere, so — maybe not.

MS. MCQUAID: What is the — when you've had exhibitions, have you been involved in the installation of them? I mean, how would — what is your ideal way of showing your work?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, you know, the serious exhibitions that I did — here's the shot from FIT. You didn't go and see that, did you?

MS. MCQUAID: I didn't see it.

MS. HERNMARCK: I mean, that's just one room. It was an amazing — they were stacked. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: But I have a whole — I can show you more. Let me see.

MS. MCQUAID: Now, were you involved in the — in this installation?

MS. HERNMARCK: I designed the whole thing because —

MS. MCQUAID: You just —

MS. HERNMARCK: And this — no because Dorothy Globus was doing it with me — but I was the one who found out which owner was willing to lend. And so — and that — then that created the exhibition because I had to — before we started shipping things to Sweden, I had — I had to know what — you know, before asking for them to — I had to know how the exhibition was going to look.

Let me show you this full screen here. Here are some nice pictures from FIT we can go through quickly.

MS. MCQUAID: Where is that work?

MS. HERNMARCK: Appleton, WI. Yeah, that's one of the best. It's 50 feet long.

MS. MCQUAID: Gosh.

MS. HERNMARCK: Dorothy built that wall.

MS. MCQUAID: And what's the name of it?

MS. HERNMARCK: *Journey* [1977].

MS. MCQUAID: *Journey*.

MS. HERNMARCK: It was mentioned in the book. And this is the one for Pepsi-Cola [*Up & Down*, 1989], with the five segments. And here we had designs, and we had the charts, and we had, you know, things, background information that made it more interesting. There's the boy. [*Portrait of a Boy*, 1969]

MS. MCQUAID: You were there with — yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: So there was this smaller room outside, and then the big room. So here you see *Rainforest* peeking out — the other two flower — yeah. And then a wall and the photo enlargement behind, you could see.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's nice. That's a nice touch. Nice installation, shows the process.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, no, it was —

MS. MCQUAID: Because I think — was there a film about your work at this time?

MS. HERNMARCK: No.

MS. MCQUAID: That's just — I mean, I just — I just really loved seeing this —

MS. HERNMARCK: That, yes.

MS. MCQUAID: — and seeing how it worked, and how you — how you composed the picture. And I mean, it was very carefully done.

MS. HERNMARCK: It was well done, yes. Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: And then —

MS. HERNMARCK: No, there's room to make — here's the whole Weyerhauser tapestry design. There's my design. There's — on the cover *Interiors*; here I am giving a talk at the opening; and here's the Swedish king looking at this magazine in front of the tapestry. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's great. That's great. That's great.

MS. HERNMARCK: So there were lots of —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's beautiful. Amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: I love this, the whole thing. Isn't that something? But wait till you see this in Sweden because it looked even better in Sweden.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's amazing.

MS. HERNMARCK: So we can go through it. Here's the screen.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: Now we're in Sweden. This is — so it's a whole different kind of — it was called *Daylight*. It's separate rooms, and there's one huge room. And this is all my early work, then, on the lower floor. And this — you've seen that. And then the stairs going out. And that's the big beautiful room.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, wow.

MS. HERNMARCK: And it was all nature scenes, and here was —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, beautiful.

MS. HERNMARCK: So — show you the — so that is *Poppies*.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, God.

MS. HERNMARCK: And — now, where's *Journey*? It must be here somewhere, the long shot of *Journey*. Let me see if I can find it. There. I love that.

MS. MCQUAID: That's — so slightly curved.

MS. HERNMARCK: They built the wall. At the end they curved it, to house it. Isn't that beautiful? [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: What kind of — what building was this?

MS. HERNMARCK: This was the home of a Swedish prince who was an impressionist painter. And this was his painting studio.

MS. MCQUAID: Wow. Oh, my. Extraordinary.

MS. HERNMARCK: Waldemarsudde. And it drew — it was on for nine weeks, and it drew 61,000 people. I couldn't believe it.

MS. MCQUAID: That's incredible.

MS. HERNMARCK: And neither could they. Nobody could believe it. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Is this — is — and this is a museum.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Well, you know, I was — fortunately, when I hung it, I got on two news channels. And not only that, it was part of the blinker for that night's program. So a lot of people saw it on the news.

MS. MCQUAID: Saw that.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then it was word of mouth. But for nine weeks it was just crowded. And once I took the docent tour because she was sick, and I was there — this room, there were 400 people in it on a Tuesday to hear — so it was —

MS. MCQUAID: That's extraordinary.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. And I — and I —

MS. MCQUAID: And that's what — I mean, that must be so gratifying. I mean, certainly as — for a textile curator, it's very gratifying that there's — people still are drawn to textiles. And as much as sometimes we — I mean, sometimes I feel like, you know, there's — people are turned off by textiles. I think when you can present them with work that changes what they think about textiles, how extraordinary and, you know, how different it is than what they expect, then you're really —

MS. HERNMARCK: Let me show you something else I did. Here is a minimizing glass hanging on the wall with a string. So they could use them and look at the thing, get more distance. And it was black on the wall under each one because people had used them so much. [Inaudible.]

MS. MCQUAID: That's great. Well, it becomes an interactive experience, too, I think, which is always helpful.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, and then there were some color pictures, but the color photographer arrived when it was getting too dark. So I tried to doctor this color, but I missed getting it, and I missed getting it video filmed. I had — and the last day — and I wasn't there all the time. I was back here. So I was upset about that.

MS. MCQUAID: And what year — this was in —

MS. HERNMARCK: '99.

MS. MCQUAID: '99. Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: And it traveled where else?

MS. HERNMARCK: Between those two. It was only in — at FIT in June into July, and then in Sweden from September until early December because the owners didn't want to be without the works too long. You know, they couldn't let them go longer. So that was — I would've —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, so it's limited.

MS. HERNMARCK: And to organize it, you know.

MS. MCQUAID: It's huge.

MS. HERNMARCK: Now we're back. I did this myself because — more or less because you can't — the museums didn't have the staff to sit and write all these owners, and I have a box this big — all the correspondence from the whole event. And it all started because I wanted the book done. And then they said, "You can't have a book if you don't have a show," because that's the opportunity to sell the book.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, exactly.

MS. HERNMARCK: And then I had to learn from the writer that you had to apply — find money towards the book because they were never going to print enough to make it worthwhile to make the book. So that money had to be raised. And she helped me with that. And this — six Swedish foundations gave money to the project. The Swedish consul in New York gave the first money to Patricia Malarcher to travel around the U.S. and look at my installations. They gave him — we got \$2,000 from him. That was the beginning. And then one Swedish foundation called Pro Svecia in California gave 10,000 [dollars] to FIT towards the show. The staff at FIT were wonderful. They were really great to work with.

MS. MCQUAID: Who was — so who was — who was the —

MS. HERNMARCK: Dorothy Globus.

MS. MCQUAID: Dorothy, Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: That was her — yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: But was she the — but who was the director of the museum at the time? Was it —

MS. HERNMARCK: No, she was. She was the director of the FIT museum.

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's right. Okay. I thought she was — Okay, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah. So she actually — I was very glad that she said yes. But the problem at FIT was that The *New York Times* refused — I mean, one shouldn't push journalists. And nobody wrote a word about it, which was really unlucky because people didn't know about it.

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, that's too bad.

MS. HERNMARCK: And when it all closed in Sweden, I felt, Okay, I can die now. [Laughter.] This is —

MS. MCQUAID: Well, that's very satisfying.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, especially when you think that after this show I've had 10 big tapestry commissions happen.

MS. MCQUAID: I know, that's what I was going to say. It's like — what — I mean — and it's —

MS. HERNMARCK: I couldn't believe it. I thought it would be all over. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Right, I mean, it's been —

MS. HERNMARCK: But you know, with Tom Campbell's shows at the Met drawing a quarter of a million people —

MS. MCQUAID: I know, tapestries.

MS. HERNMARCK: — I mean, it proves that people are interested. And to my show in Sweden, women would drag their husbands.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, and then they —

MS. HERNMARCK: And then they got mesmerized because they couldn't figure out how I'd done it. And so that was really great too.

MS. MCQUAID: No, they're really — they're masterpieces, truly.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, and the — oh, the other thing I realized was that that's why I gave so much to the Minneapolis — because I felt that it's the mass that makes it more worthwhile. One single one doesn't really do — the mass does something much bigger. So —

MS. MCQUAID: So I asked Niels this question, and I'll ask you as well. What motivates you to continue your work, to continue to do your work? I mean, what is it that gets you up every morning — [laughter] — beside Niels. What is it about what you do that — I mean, you obviously love it and have fun.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: But anything else?

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it's — you know, I have this talent. I think especially the less people get interested in textiles, the more sort of annoyed I get. [Laughs.] Well, don't want to give — I always said years — this is years ago — I'd say, "I'll be the last one standing" —

MS. MCQUAID: [Laughs.]

MS. HERNMARCK: — because I see people abandoning the field, you know, while I'm —

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, but I'm — I actually — that was going to be my next question too. But is —

MS. HERNMARCK: But now what keeps me going is that I still think that I'm completely unique, and nobody does anything like this. And it's a tradition I want — you know, I'm — I've already invested so much of my life in it. There's no point in stopping. And also, as you said, I can't think of anything more fun to do. And that's never stopped because if I get — you know, I may end up organizing — being on the computer, you know, pulling things forward like this rejuvenation now of the weaving form in Sweden that's going on. Young people have taken it over, and they're going to bring it forward. And I'm so excited by that that, you know, of course I get involved. [Laughs.] And — but then, you know, I go back to the loom, and I start weaving again. I feel so good just doing it, you know. Yeah, it's — it just occupies me. You forget everything else, and it's such a great feeling.

MS. MCQUAID: Well, where do you think the textile tradition is going to go? I mean, do you — do you have positive feelings about the future for textiles? Do you think it's — I mean, there's — yes, we've seen a decline in certain — I mean, in certain areas of the world in textile traditions. But do you think that there's a desire to kind of go back to textile roots and certain textile traditions?

MS. HERNMARCK: I think — Sweden is a great example in this regard — is that the Industrial Revolution come — came very late to Sweden. So when it came along, people were already getting up in arms to protect it because they saw what happened to France and England, Germany, where all the crafts disappeared. It all went industrial. It all went hideous in many ways. So they lost their roots. So the Scandinavians said heck, we've got our roots. We don't have to lose them. We're going to keep going. And they took the William Morris idea, and then they — and the Bauhaus — and then they said, Okay, artist for industry, but first train in the craft.

The word for "designer" in Swedish is "form-giver" — form-giver. And it was always felt that the hand is the tool where it all starts. And they kept that feeling. And the prince — [laughs] — you just saw pictures of his home — he supported these people who over a hundred years ago were working on protecting and starting that Swedish handicraft guild. And, you know, Märta-Määs-Fjetterströms needed support. He made sure she had it, to start her business. And there was an enlightened awareness.

And it's so sad in countries like China, where it goes in a breakneck speed. The Japanese, of course, are doing their best to hold onto it. And Junichi Arai has done a huge job trying to save those textile industries. Whether it — he can save them forever, who knows. But the Japanese are not giving up on their appreciation of crafts.

MS. MCQUAID: Right. Yeah. Right.

MS. HERNMARCK: So — but Indonesia — you know, God knows what is going to happen there. When I was in Australia in 1988, I was the keynote speaker of the weaving studios conference. That was fun. I ran into young Indonesian girls who knew about me. I was just flabbergasted in '88, but I had had enough publicity — special — that they had my pictures on their wall, you know. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, that's so nice.

MS. HERNMARCK: You know, I thought that was so — because I have an Indonesian textile collection that Mary Kahlenberg has helped me assemble. [Laughs.] So it went in a full circle. But I just wish and hope that those cultures — but then you have Carol [Cassidy?] — what's her name — who's in Laos, who's —

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Not Sullivan; what is her name?

MS. MCQUAID: Oh, gosh, I know who you're — I know who you're — yeah.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well — and Jack, of course, is —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, and there's others too who kind of go to — I mean, more and more it's becoming a way of — it's benefiting local economy, it's reviving tradition, it's —

MS. HERNMARCK: I think the loss of these things are taken more seriously more and more because you have to help those things survive.

MS. MCQUAID: Well, and I think as we — as communication becomes much faster and we can be — we can be so global, I think we appreciate what makes each region distinct — at the same time, that we yearn for some kind of, you know, distinctiveness. And so I think that this sort of revival of regional crafts and traditions is something that I think is — I think it's only going to become much more meaningful.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, no, I think — I think you're right. And I — even my teacher Edna Martin 10 years ago or more would say — because we were deploring the fact that the art schools have — sort of dropping their textile programs because it doesn't fit in with the international art programs, where it's only the few mediums that are accepted. She said, "Oh, don't worry" — she was 93 when she said it — "It'll go underground, but it'll never disappear."

MS. MCQUAID: Exactly. I think people just — they rebel against, you know, kind of this homogeneity.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, and of course this knitting wave is — [laughs].

MS. MCQUAID: Yeah, I know. But you know what? My feeling is — and this is why I have hope for textiles, and I feel very positive about it. Whatever it takes, you know, without kind of, you know, minimizing or — but I think — you know, I think each — I think it's important to kind of keep textiles in the forefront.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes.

MS. MCQUAID: And if it's knitting now, it's going to be something else in a few years.

MS. HERNMARCK: Mm-hmm, yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: But I think it's so important that that still becomes — that people, you know, are faced with textiles. And we all are faced with textiles every day, but as an art form, I think they should always have that in front of them.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, in some ways it seems like either you were born with an interest in textiles — you don't seem to acquire it all of a sudden. And you know, of all my clients — of course, if you don't look at the architects — if — the interest in textile is there before they approach me. So it's always had — that that's a sort of person who wants a textile —

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: — someone who already knows about it.

MS. MCQUAID: That's interesting.

MS. HERNMARCK: Yeah.

MS. MCQUAID: Okay.

MS. HERNMARCK: So — but — [inaudible].

MS. MCQUAID: Anything else that you want to say — be put on the record for? [Laughter.] I mean, for me it's been — it's been great. It's been a great experience listening to both of you talk.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, it's nice to talk — for me it's nice that you are interested in textiles because that has meant your questions have been —

MS. MCQUAID: And also I think, for me — you know, why I especially enjoyed talking to both of you is that I sort of feel like I'm a generalist because I'm not an expert in textiles. But I have — I can — I understand textiles in a way that can kind of put them in a — in a larger context. And I think that's what's — I think that's really — I think that's important, and I feel like that's what I can kind of give to the field. And —

MS. HERNMARCK: Yes, I mean —

MS. MCQUAID: I mean, your work in terms of architecture, how it's — I mean, in that kind of context, I think it's — it has a really importance — you know, kind of a relationship.

MS. HERNMARCK: Well, you know, what I — what I think is unfortunate is that here I have tapestries hanging that millions of people see every day. And they don't know what they're looking at. And they don't know where I came from. And so I think in the book — I'm very happy — see, this book is the only place where both of my halves are in one place.

MS. MCQUAID: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HERNMARCK: Because as — people in Sweden, they have — after the show they have a little more understanding, but they don't understand what the other world is.

MS. MCQUAID: Right, right.

MS. HERNMARCK: And they don't think about that this is a question of two worlds, and it's a question of an immigrant who took one thing with her and did it. So — but I think that's — on that level, it could reach a lot of people. But mostly I think it should be brought to the forefront more — what is it. And the question is how do you achieve that. In this day of plurality, you know, how do you — would you reach a broader audience. Maybe, you know, a movie about my life might be the way to do it. [Laughs.]

MS. MCQUAID: Well, I loved — I love seeing — well, I think any sort of film that deals with, you know, kind of explaining an artist's process I just — I think is so important, and a good — a — such an important document.

MS. HERNMARCK: I think — you know, I don't think you saw the five-minute one that was just made, the — did you —

[End of interview.]