CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW OF SHARON K. EMANUELLI

by Joan M. Benedetti

Sharon K. Emanuelli
In her home in Los Angeles
March 23, 2009

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Sharon (Shan) K. Emanuelli was born on July 26, 1951 in Brawley, California, where her family still farms. She is the oldest of four children and lived in Brawley until she went away to Occidental College. She received a B.A. in art with an English minor in 1973 from Occidental and an M.A. in Three-Dimensional Media in 1978 from CSU Northridge. In 1982, she married Michael N. Kaiser, a movie advertising executive, and became step-mom to Guy Endore-Kaiser. Alexander ("Sandro") is their younger son.

After a summer internship at the L.A. County Museum of Art in 1973, she worked for hotel companies. In late 1976, while completing her M.A., she started volunteering at the Craft and Folk Art Museum (CAFAM), conducting membership and other tasks at the behest of her fellow Oxy alum, Patrick Ela, after he had become CAFAM Administrative Director. She was hired to coordinate the 1977 and 1978 Festival of Masks, developing it from a small parade into a two-day visual and performing arts festival with ancillary events. After that she worked full-time as Program Aide and then Assistant to the Program Director, Edith Wyle, and was appointed Senior Curator in 1981. Although her curating focus was contemporary crafts and art, she worked on or organized some folk art and cross-over exhibitions (notably Puzzles Old and New*).* Shan was liaison to the CAFAM Contemporary Craft Council, and Michael (who was on the CAFAM Board in the nineties), was also active in it. She coordinated most exhibition-related activities at CAFAM from 1978-1984, when she and Mike moved to New York. There she completed work on the Puzzles show and its international tour, conducted a project for the American Craft Museum, and was curator of exhibitions and 20th-Century art at the Hudson River Museum for two years, before returning to L.A in 1988.

She subsequently worked for the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art's West Coast Regional Center, collecting archival materials of Southern California art world figures. In 1993, she did an extensive interview for the Archives with Edith Wyle, CAFAM's founder; and later, other oral histories for the Archives. She co-curated Museum for a New Century for CAFAM in 1995. In 2011, she wrote about Edith Wyle and the founding of The Egg and The Eye gallery and CAFAM for the publication that accompanied the museum’s exhibition, “Golden State of Craft: California 1960 – 1985.” She has been active since 1982 with ArtTable, serving in various local and national leadership positions, and she was Vice-President on the Board of the Italian Oral History Institute, 2000-2006. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and their son, Sandro. Guy and his family live nearby.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer: Joan M. Benedetti. B.A., Theater; M.A., Library Science, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. **Related Experience:** Milwaukee Public Library Decorative Arts Librarian, 1967 – 1968; CAFAM Museum Librarian 1976 – 1997. From 1998 – 2012, Benedetti worked to process the CAFAM Records, 1965 – 1997, which are now part of Special Collections at the UCLA Young Research Library. From 2008 – 2010 she conducted oral history interviews with seventeen former CAFAM staff and trustees; almost 60 hours were recorded and transcribed. She is the author of several articles on folk art terminology and small art museum libraries and the editor of *Art Museum Libraries and Librarianship*, Lanham, MD: ARLIS/NA and Scarecrow Press, 2007.

Time and Setting of Interviews

Place: Sharon K. Emanuelli's home in Los Angeles.

Dates, time, length of sessions, and total number of hours recorded: Session 1--March 23, 2009, 10 am: 1:45:05; Session 2--March 30, 2009, 10 am: 2:43:44; total number of hours: 4:28:49.

Persons present during the interview: Sharon Emanuelli and Joan Benedetti.

Conduct and Content of Interview: To prepare for the interviews with Emanuelli, Benedetti reviewed the CAFAM timeline developed while working on the CAFAM Records at UCLA. Her knowledge of the CAFAM Records, her experience with the other CAFAM oral history interviews, and her personal knowledge of CAFAM during her 21-year tenure there, assisted in her preparation for the Emanuelli interview. She also reviewed lists of CAFAM exhibitions produced during Emanuelli's tenure at CAFAM.

The first session covers Emanuelli's childhood, schooling, and first jobs, and then describes the work she did at CAFAM, first with her former Occidental College schoolmate, Administrative Director Patrick Ela (who later became the CAFAM Executive Director), and then the start of her work with the CAFAM Founder and Program Director, Edith Wyle. She also worked during the first two years (1977-78) coordinating and developing the Festival of Masks, an annual CAFAM event. The second session concerns primarily the CAFAM exhibitions Shan coordinated, designed, or curated, as well as her observations concerning CAFAM events that took place after 1995 when she was no longer directly involved with the museum.

Editing: The transcript was edited by Joan and Shan for spelling of names and Joan added full names and opening dates of CAFAM exhibitions where appropriate. Both Shan and Joan also added in brackets further information for clarification and deleted with ellipses some back-and-forth comments that did not add to the reader's understanding of the narrative. Time stamps have been added to both the table of contents and the transcript at five-minute intervals; the time stamps make it easier to locate the topics in the transcript that are mentioned in the table of contents.

Table of Contents

Gallery 3 poster—Ann Robbins and Susan Skinner—Twelve Artists—Two Schools of Fish **1:25:00** More about Two Schools of Fish—Murals of Aztlan curated by Frank Romero **1:30:00** Shifra Goldman review **1:35:00** Shan curates John Cederquist—Guardians of Happiness problems **1:40:00** Shan designs American Porcelain—The Dark Crystal **1:45:00** Annex space--Black Folk Art in America—Masks in Motion (1984)—More about John Cederquist **1:50:00** Ebendorf and Ross.

Mike and Shan move to NYC **1:55:00** Puzzles Old and New **2:00:00**—Jerry Slocum collection--Puzzle house and parties **2:05:00** Puzzle book—Janet Marcus education programs **2:10:00** Shan and Marcia Page in Tokyo—Other puzzle venues **2:15:00** Mike Kaiser on Board—Move to 5800 Wilshire—Ratkovich development **2:20:00** CAFAM at May Co. 1989 - 1992—Native America: Reflecting Contemporary Realities—May Co. problems—More about move to 5800 Wilshire—Merging of 5800 and 5814 Wilshire by Hodgetts and Fung—Inability to buy 5800 Wilshire **2:25:00** Shan works on Museum for a New Century re-opening exhibition—Egg and the Eye, CAFAM history **2:30:00** More about Museum for a New Century--CAFAM was dark for 2.5 years—1995 "Homecoming" weekend—Shan busy raising son—CAFAM financial troubles—Funding dries up--Closing in 1997—Jim Pieper **2:35:00** Peter Tokovsky—Stella and Fred Krieger—Patrick Ela as Interim Director—CAFAM closed for 14 months before re-opening—Library and archives given away 1997—LACMA negotiations—Patrick Ela and Al Nodal save CAFAM 1999 **2:40:00** Edith's memorial--Edith as "second mother"—CAFAM memorable for everyone
End of Session 2--2:43:44

CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW OF SHARON K. EMANUELLI

Session 1: Monday, March 23, 2009. Interviewed by Joan M. Benedetti (1 hour, 50 minutes, 5 seconds).

JB: This is Monday, March 23, 2009 and I'm here in Los Angeles with Shan Emanuelli in her home--actually *Sharon Kay* Emanuelli--but “Shan” is how most of us know her. ["Shan" rhymes with "pan."] And we're going to be talking about her involvement with the Craft and Folk Art Museum as well as some of her personal background--and my name is Joan Benedetti. So Shan, let’s start at the beginning. Can you tell us where and when you were born?

SE: I was born in Brawley, California. That's spelled B-R-A-W-L-E-Y. In 1951, July 26. I'm the oldest child of Robert and Marie Emanuelli.

JB: And so you have siblings, I guess?

SE: Yes, I have three siblings. I have a brother, [Donald Robert], who’s a year and a half younger, a sister, [Carol A.E. Smith], who’s seven years younger, and another sister, [Susan Marie Mawhorter], who’s nine years younger.

JB: And Brawley is in Southern California.

SE: In the Imperial Valley. My dad was a farmer and his father before him farmed there. [The Emanuelli ancestors were farmers as far back as anyone knows in small Italian villages in the Veneto region.] And now my brother and my [three] nephews are farming. [All of them have been highly regarded for their skill and innovations.]

JB: Oh, that's wonderful. And were you involved with that, with the ranch tasks and . . . ?

SE: No, not so much. [We lived in town.] My dad started taking my brother out when he was very young--in elementary school--in the summers especially. I would go out and ride on the tractors and hang out with the chickens and stuff like that. My grandpa liked to keep chickens and there were some horses left over from the plow days, you know, the horse and plow days. [He also liked to ride bareback, as he did growing up in Italy. My grandmother was born in Italy too, but came here when she was three with her family.] And I didn't really, the only time I ever really had to work was when I asked to. I was a song leader my senior year--

JB: In high school?

SE: In high school, yeah, and [my friends and] I wanted to go to [song-leading] camp, . . . so we asked if we could do something on the ranch and my dad gave us a--

JB: To pay for camp?

SE: Yeah. My dad gave us a job pulling weeds in the cotton field. [We started at one end.] My brother and his friends were at the other end of the field. We decided it would be a really good idea to wear our bathing suits and get a tan.

JB: Oh, no.

SE: [We joked that my uncle had an eagle eye, that he could point out a missed weed from 100 yards away! Of course, the plants were still less than a foot high at that point.] We discovered that it's not a good idea to eat bananas and go out in the fields and sweat. It attracts mosquitoes.

JB: Oh my goodness.

SE: However, as the cotton pickers rolled by, the [drivers] would honk at us; they thought it was quite nice.

JB: Sure, it was seniors in high school. And you didn't get a sunburn?

SE: I don’t know.

JB: You don’t remember that far [back]?

SE: I'm sure we used, by then, whatever kind of sun block they had. It wasn't very good then, but my dad was already using that because of his own exposure, so . . . .

JB: Oh, boy. Well, it's great to have a farm in the family.

SE: Yeah. We still do. In fact, it's going to be--we're negotiating contracts [to exploit our mineral rights for geothermal energy] . . . right now.

JB: Oh, wow. So you went to school in Brawley?

SE: I did. And I graduated from Brawley Union High School, valedictorian.

JB: Really?

SE: Yeah.

JB: I guess I shouldn't be surprised at that. That must have impressed your family--or did they expect that?

SE: I don’t know. [My grandmother liked my speech a lot.] My cousin, [Leland], was five years older and he had graduated as a valedictorian; I was in eighth grade and I said, "Oh, mom, I'm going to do that too," and she said, "Don’t . . . [count on it!]." But I really intended to, and I worked hard. I was a good student anyway. . . . I liked being in school. I got teased about it but I still did it.

JB: And you probably had even more energy then than now.

SE: Oh yeah, I had a lot of energy then.

JB: I've always noticed that about you. You seem to always juggle a lot of different things.

SE: Yes.

JB: I'd just like to know . . . what . . . your career aspirations [were] at that time? Did you take art classes, was art part of what you thought of when you--?

SE: My mother was a painter and she had gone to--my dad had two years of college, junior college-- **[5:00]** but my mother had gone to Mary Hardin-Baylor [College] . . . .

JB: Where is that?

SE: In Texas . . . . [She grew up in northern Texas and southern Oklahoma. Baylor University was co-ed and Mary Harden-Baylor College was women-only. They had a common origin in the 1840s and split by gender in the 1870s. My mother's close girlfriend had a brother who attended the University and he tried to convince her to apply there and promised to look after her. However, she chose the women's college to study art and education. She had to transfer when her younger sister was accepted to a state university in Oklahoma and her parents moved the whole family there. Before they finished their degrees, the family moved to Long Beach. My mother worked for Douglas Aircraft as a tool draftsman. She had only a high school drafting class to prepare her for this. Douglas moved her male boss to another department in order to give her his job and sent her to a six-week engineering review course at USC. She later drew the plans for the house my parents built when I was three. After the war she was given an emergency credential to teach in Brawley, and she pursued teaching courses at UCLA, but, discouraged from continuing by my father, who thought she shouldn't have to work, she never finished her degree. She taught kindergarten and pre-primary classes until I was born.

From the beginning, I was learning how to use all kinds of materials. My mother was the town event decorator. For any event that went on, it seemed she was making the decorations. And she sewed beautifully. She learned how to draft patterns and made a suit for my dad at one point. She was always learning how to do something new.]

JB: Well, you come by a lot of things naturally then because I know you were involved in the plans for this house.

SE: Yeah. Well, this was an existing house and we added on to it. [We used architects.]

JB: But I was wondering, when she was decorating for various events in Brawley, did you help her with that?

SE: I helped with everything. I cleaned the house on Saturdays. We had housekeepers, usually, and when she had two little kids we definitely had a full-time housekeeper, because with the four of us--it was . . . a lot. And she had some health issues during that time. But I remember making hundreds and hundreds of crepe paper flowers for the Poinsettia Ball [of a sorority organization]. And then . . . [another time, she drew elves in several positions, and] one of her friends cut . . .

[the elf shapes] out of wood [planks]. They put them on . . . [bases] and put little candle holders on them. My mother painted them so realistically and beautifully, [most were sold] and eventually she threw the [rest] all away. I don't know why, but they were darling and beautiful. She just did stuff like that. I mean there must have been fifty of these . . . elves--I don't know--that they worked on all year long. [They were about 24" wide or tall, depending on their position.]

And there's a sorority she belonged to and the yearbooks were just incredible that she made for them . . . . I always helped with whatever I could. We went to art classes together when I was in high school. She was always taking classes. She could have taught them but she would take them and be supportive of whoever was teaching, usually somebody without as much of a support system as she had, so then when they couldn't teach, she would teach the class--substitute for them. And she taught kids at her house in the summers, but that was after I was in college.

JB: And in high school--you must have taken art classes then.

SE: I took art from Mrs. Jernigan and I wanted to be an art major [in college]. However, my grandmother at that point was giving me a hard time about that. She was saying things to my mother like--why do you keep painting? You have a garage full of paintings.

JB: Now, was this her mother?

SE: No, my dad's mother.

JB: Her mother-in-law.

SE: Yeah, who was different, very different from my mom. And from my dad too, actually. But anyway it made me feel like I wasn't going to be able to earn a living with it, so I thought, "I'll be an English major then because I'm good at that too." I liked to write and I was one of the few--there was one particular teacher who . . . [rarely] gave A's, you know, one of those English teachers--and I always got . . . A's [from him], so I thought I could be an English major in college. And I started out that way and I did take a lot of English classes but by the second semester I had switched . . . [majors], because I figured out that there wasn't any more money in English than art. It didn't matter really.

JB: So how did you decide to go to Occidental?

SE: I had a friend who was a year ahead of me and he told me I should go. He thought I would do well there and he said **[10:00]**--I'll never forget this: It was at a football game. He had been a [high school] football player and he played football and rugby at Occidental, and became a doctor. And Rick came up to me at a football game and he said, "You need to come to Occidental," and I said, "Why?" And he said, "Oh, you'll do really well there," and I said, "What do you mean? . . . Why is that?" and he said, "You're smart, and besides that, you're pretty." . . . [He said there was

a] saying about Occidental women . . . , “Occidental--where the men are men, and so are the women,” or something like that. [He thought I'd have a lot of dates!]

JB: I thought you were going to say there were more men there than women.

SE: Well, there definitely were but, at that time--it was just kind of a funny thing, I don’t know . . . . My aunt had actually gone there--my father’s sister-in-law . . . . My [older] cousin went to Pomona and I did apply to Pomona, although they [apparently] lost my application. When we went for the interview, they didn't have it, and they didn't have the interview scheduled . . . . It was odd . . . .

JB: Did you commute there or did you stay on campus?

SE: Oh, on--absolutely, you have to stay on campus [for the first two or three years]--they required it. I couldn't possibly have commuted. That's a four-hour drive . . . .

JB: Oh, is it that far? I didn't realize.

SE: Yeah.

JB: You probably were ready to--

SE: Oh, I was hot to go [away to school] . . . . I wanted to apply to Stanford and they wouldn't let me because another English teacher, Miss Morrow, who looked [exactly] like Ben Franklin, her hero . . . . Miss Morrow told my mother: “go to Stanford and turn left.” [Brawley was a very conservative place.] So I didn't [apply] to Stanford, but I did apply to Occidental and UCLA and I don’t know if I got into every place I applied, but I did get into Oxy.

JB: So you started out in English but then you switched quickly to--

SE: Be an art major.

JB: Was it specialized enough to be just studio art or--

SE: Yes. And I mostly did sculpture. I mean I moved toward a sculpture emphasis, . . . but that was what I was [most] interested in.

JB: I know that Patrick Ela went there too. Was he there at the same time?

SE: Yes, he was a senior [art history major] when I was a freshman and we were friendly--and also Bob Roman, who became the educator at the L.A. County Art Museum. And a woman named Bon Gordon, who was a painter, and did pretty well for a while. I haven't heard about her in years. I should look her up. And also Sally Hibbard, [who] became Patrick’s wife.

JB: First wife, yes.

SE: And was a registrar at the Getty. I don’t know if she still is.

JB: I don’t know either. . . . So what was Occidental like **[15:00]** at that time?

SE: It was--you know, 1969 to 1973--so it was [at the height] of the Vietnam War and there were lots of demonstrations going on. At Oxy they were never violent because the professors would just stop having class and invite everybody out for seminars on Vietnam so—[laughter]. [People set up typewriters in the quad so we wrote lots of letters.] When I went to look at the school . . . [during] my senior year . . . when I was applying, I was so excited because there was this guy with a big Afro and a microphone down in the quad talking to everybody and I [thought], this is exciting--I'm going to really enjoy it. [This was not Barack Obama, who was at Occidental from 1979 – 1981.] And the campus is beautiful. It has lots of green and the buildings are . . . [attractive]. The art professor that I interviewed with, [Robert Hansen], liked my portfolio and recommended [me] to the admissions committee. You know, it was an interesting place because, really, visual art was not the best department on the campus. If I had gone looking for a school to major in art, maybe it wasn't the perfect place to go to become an artist.

JB: But you were interested in other things too, especially when you started out.

SE: Oh yeah, I always was interested in other [things]. . . . Liberal arts was really a good thing for me and in the end it's probably [as] pertinent [as] the actual art classes. Not necessarily--but I mean it had as much to do with how I ended up, you know. Oxy emphasizes writing. Even science majors had to write term papers and their writing was graded on their skill in writing as well as what they said. So that was a big emphasis. Everybody had to take history of civilization for six quarters, two years. We had the quarter system at the time. **[20:00]** And my first English class was really interesting. I struggled to get a B.

JB: And here you had been getting A’s in high school.

SE: Yeah, and with a really difficult teacher. All these kids came in from prep schools--not all of them. I mean there were a lot of kids from public high schools too, but a lot of prep school kids in this one class, my first English one, whatever it was, and they’d already read . . . [most of] the reading list and they’d had a whole--I was in a college prep course, that was the track I was in, but these kids just knew so much more than I did, and were so much more worldly. . . . I mean, I’d gone to Europe with a group of kids and my grandfather was in Italy at the time, in northern Italy in the village where he grew up, and he waited for me all summer to show up, but my parents weren't sophisticated enough to figure out how to get me--at the end of this trip--to [get me to where he was]. I was [with] a group of kids--

JB: What a shame.

SE: It was a Southern California Baptist [Convention] tour. We went to a music conference, and helped build a church in France and stuff like that. Anyway, they didn't get it together to get me to Italy to hang out with him, when I was right there, but not in Italy. So here are all these really worldly kids [in my class] and--you know.

JB: So did that make you feel more competitive then, or did it discourage you?

SE: Well, I tried hard. I was a very social creature, and I'd almost rather do anything than start a paper so—[laughter].

JB: That's a common writers' complaint.

SE: . . . [One] bad thing they did was . . . [to experiment with] independent studies for freshmen, so my first quarter I had an independent study. I had to choose the topic, there was no guidance.

JB: So you didn't have the discipline?

SE: [I needed more direction.] And that didn't work out. I mean, I wrote a paper but I didn't think it was that great an experience.

JB: So at this time, were you still thinking . . . in terms of being an artist?

SE: Yeah, absolutely. That's what I thought I would do. I thought I might teach eventually, or I'd get a master's degree, I figured, and I'd probably teach [at college level].

JB: Were there any thoughts about working in a museum? You did work--or interned--at LACMA eventually.

SE: Yeah, . . . that happened the summer I graduated [from Oxy]. When I was getting ready to graduate, I wanted to find a job and I went to the--

JB: I was wondering if it was before or after you graduated because--

SE: It was the summer after I graduated. I went to the student placement office and they had a listing for a job at L.A. County [Museum of Art] as a registrar's aide and I turned out to be the only person who wasn't in graduate school in the group, and we completely cataloged the County Art Museum's collection, which had never been [thoroughly] done. [There was a card catalog that came from the old Museum of History, Science, and Art to LACMA, which had opened in 1965. Many records needed to be corrected.]

JB: That's pretty amazing, Shan.

SE: It was an incredible experience and I adored the registrar who was Pat Nauert. N-A-U--

JB: Oh, I remember--vaguely remember—[her].

SE: E-R-T, I think, or something like that.

JB: I certainly remember the name. Did you ever tell Renée Montgomery about what you had done as an intern?

SE: I think I might have talked [to her]. Was she the next one after Pat Nauert?

JB: She was the registrar for awhile. Now, unless she's retired--I don't think she's retired. She was really the one that was responsible for finally digitizing everything and getting the collection data into--you know-- a more sophisticated database.

SE: She probably even re-cataloged, I would imagine. I don't know.

JB: Sure, but she must have used some of that [data that you compiled].

SE: Oh yeah, I think so. . . . My assignment was to work with . . . [Ann Ayers]. She was [later] a curator at the Newport Harbor Art Museum and then she went to Otis [College of Art and Design] for a long time. She was the one that preceded the current curator. . . . Anyway, she was older when she went to graduate school . . . and she was not--she was one of those people that only stuck with something as long as it suited her purposes, and then she kind of moved on. She dropped out before the end of the summer, and I finished . . . [our assignments]. But . . . I could work well with her--Pat noticed that--Pat Nauert--and I kept saying, "Can't I stay, can't I stay, and work for you?" Because I knew she liked the work I did. **[25:00]** . . . . There were ten or twelve graduate students working on this. So I got to do the contemporary collection and the modern collection, and then I got sent out to the warehouse downtown, [where] there [were] all kinds of . . . [objects]. [The] guard [at the warehouse was a founder of the Watts Towers Art Center. His] face is on [the Art Center's walls] --Cecil [Ferguson]. He worked with Jimmy Allen. Jimmy Allen was the head preparator at LACMA at that time [and when he retired from LACMA he worked as a facilities volunteer at CAFAM]. And while I was working out at the warehouse, Jimmy came in with a truckload of these Kellogg's corn flakes cartons that were left over from the Andy Warhol installation [that the museum had commissioned].

JB: Oh my God, really?

SE: . . . . There were maybe six or eight of them and I said, "What are you going to do with those?" and he said, "I'm throwing them out, Andy told me to throw them out." And I said, "Why?" He said, "Because he doesn't need them in the installation," and he said, "You can have them if you want," and I stuffed four of them into my car, my. . . [Oldsmobile Cutlass] that I had at the time.

JB: Wow. Do you still have them?

SE: Yes, I have two of them, and a roommate absconded with two, and I don't know where she is right now. Probably could find her. But I have two of them in my living room. And one of the curators, Carol Eliel, has been here and seen them and I said, "You know where these came from?" She said, "Oh, we were wondering [what happened to them]." They actually knew that there were missing boxes."

JB: So, somebody miscued about throwing them out.

SE: Right, and she said that Jimmy didn't remember what happened to them.

JB: He was probably protecting you.

SE: No, not me—himself—[or he really didn't remember. I'm not sure he understood the protocol in such an unusual case at the time.]

JB: Well, himself too, yeah, of course.

SE: I don't know, [he was pretty old by then and it had been 20 years since the installation], but anyway, it wouldn't matter. I could give them back. I said, "You can have them back." She said "No, just keep them." She didn't want them back.

JB: That's wonderful. So I just want to mention that--oh no, that was later, your master's.

SE: Yeah, that started later. [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] . . . . So, I begged [Pat Nauert] to let me work there, and she kept saying, "I'm sorry, I can't hire anybody, I don't have the money to do it."

JB: There was a recession going on then.

SE: '73, yeah.

JB: Or the beginnings of it anyway.

SE: So I went and found another job through Occidental's student placement office, and it was working at a hotel reservation company that contracted with independent hotels. And I don't think I'd started--or maybe I had started one or two days [before], and I got a call from Pat saying she would hire me, and I said "Oh, I've already started this other job." What an idiot I was! I hated that job. I stayed with it for a year and a half or so.

JB: Well, but I can understand how it would be scary to--

SE: No, it was like I thought I had started it and I was obligated to stay there. I didn't know what to do, and nobody said to me, "You idiot--just drop it--they'll find somebody else--who cares?" It wasn't an important job, you know. But one thing I did learn there were secretarial skills. My typing got really good, I learned how to stuff a million envelopes fast, and that came in really handy when I started volunteering at CAFAM.

JB: All of these things that you've done, it seems to me, probably came in handy at CAFAM. Now, at what point--so you were not there when Patrick Ela started working in the education department--

SE: Yes, he --

JB: -- at LACMA, were you?

SE: He was working in the education department when I was there.

JB: Oh, he was? OK.

SE: For Ruth Bowman.

JB: Yes, right.

SE: And I ran into him . . . one day . . . what year did he start at CAFAM?

JB: He started at CAFAM in ’75.

SE: Oh, no, then he was still working there. Somehow--

JB: I don’t know how long he was at LACMA. I guess I don’t have that information about when he started at LACMA. [Ela started at LACMA in 1974.]

SE: He was there, and I ran into him [that summer]. But I ran into him another time at LACMA and he was [working] at CAFAM [by then] and he said, "What are you doing?" and I said, "I'm in graduate school getting my masters in three-dimensional media," and he said, "Why don’t you come and--and I [told him], "I just got **[30:00]** laid off from the job I was in because they wanted me to work full-time. I wouldn't, so they laid me off and I got to have unemployment." And he said, "Oh, why don’t you come and volunteer for me," and I did. And by then I was already about halfway through my graduate program.

JB: So that was probably the end of ’75 or beginning of ’76? . . . . No, actually, the [beginning] of ’77. Must have been ’77. That’s what you had on your resumé.

SE: It was either December ’76 or January ’77 when I started, I think.

JB: So Patrick was the connection?

SE: Yeah.

JB: That's what I was guessing. And by that time you had transferred to Northridge to work on your MFA.

SE: MA. Yeah--they didn't offer an MFA at that time.

JB: Your M.A. And I think I told you--I guess I sent you a copy of the invitation to your MFA thesis show that we had in the CAFAM archives.

SE: You did?

JB: Didn't I send that to you?

SE: No, but I have it, you don’t need to.

JB: I figured you had a copy, but we have a copy in the--

SE: I have the thesis right downstairs with most of the pictures in it.

JB: But by that time you had been working--now you started as a volunteer [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

SE: I worked 20 hours a week and I did mostly membership processing and mailings. . . . I . . . helped out with installations. I was technically pretty good at doing anything, building or painting or drawing, whatever needed to be done in an installation. I'd had a lot of experience doing all that.

JB: In Brawley as well as at Oxy, I suppose.

SE: At Oxy [and CSUN]. And I . . . knew how to use equipment and figure things out. When you make sculpture, you learn how to figure out how to do things and where to get stuff [you need]. And I don't know where I learned how to manage a budget, but eventually I did that too. That was later, but--anyway--so I was helping out around, and Edith liked working with me in the installations because I did whatever she said, and if something needed to be painted on the wall, she would have a vision for it, and she could tell me what to do and I could do it.

JB: Now, so this was--

SE: I was good at color.

JB: This was '77. By this time, of course, the first--the beginning of the [Mask] Festival--which was just a parade, had happened already [in 1976]. You weren't really working on it, but did you go to it?

SE: I didn't go to it. I didn't know a thing about it. It was totally outside my sphere . . . . That's not entirely true actually. When I worked at the County Art Museum, a fiber artist named Kris Dey was one of the graduate students working there.

JB: I know Kris Dey. I did know her. [Her art work was in the CAFAM slide registry and later she was in Made in L.A., curated by Bernard Kester; opened January 27, 1981.]

SE: And she hooked me up with Patty Sue Jones, who was one of her friends in--they were both in graduate school [at UCLA] with Bernard Kester--and I became Patty's roommate after that summer at LACMA . . . . A friend from Oxy and I house-sat in La Cañada [for the summer] and then I needed a place to go from there, and I ended up living with Patty in Santa Monica, and Patty would go to The Egg and The Eye [gallery] to see shows, and so I'd go with her.

JB: When you were working at LACMA--

SE: [No, after LACMA.] But I didn't know about the Mask Festival.

JB: Did you never go--well, let me back up a little bit. You didn't go to the Mask Parade but you knew about The Egg and the Eye.

SE: Oh yeah.

JB: That it had turned into a museum.

SE: Well, it hadn't been a--at that point, let's see. I think it wasn't until 1975 that it started actually operating as a museum.

JB: That's right.

SE: It was nonprofit in ’73 but it was still The Egg and the Eye.

JB: That's right.

SE: And people didn't see it any differently.

JB: Right. So, did you go to the restaurant sometimes?

SE: . . . . I don’t know. I don’t remember. I mean I know for sure I went to openings with Patty and her friends. Patty was one of those people **[35:00]** that got around everywhere. She was funny in one way, she was kind of not very social in one way, she was shy, [but] she would go to parties with a big [floppy] hat on and sit in the corner, wait for people to come to her.

JB: Was she an artist--didn't you say?

SE: Yeah, she’s an artist, [working in fiber at that time].

JB: Now, did you meet--obviously, you knew Patrick. Do you remember when you met Edith? Must [have] been around that time.

SE: Yeah, when I started working there. I don’t remember the first day I met Edith by any stretch. I remember her office really well, I remember sitting in staff meetings in the office. They pulled me in right away. They just--

JB: They knew a good thing when they saw it.

SE: Yeah. Lorraine [Trippett] was there and Roman Janczak was the Preparator.

JB: Had Karen Copeland started?

SE: Yeah, Karen was there. I don’t remember Marcie at that point. Maybe Marcie was volunteering--Marcie Page.

JB: She did volunteer at the beginning, and I think she volunteered in the shop, although she may have been doing more than one thing.

SE: Yeah, I think mostly in the shop then.

JB: And she was helping Karen, [who] started out as a Registrar—eventually--when they figured out they needed a Registrar--

SE: But she [Karen] was also the Educator at that point.

JB: Well, she was interested in education always but she was not the educator until Marcie was able to take over as Registrar. Marcie started to assist Karen in the Registrar’s office. [Copeland is described in the March 1976 *CAFAM Newsletter* as "Curatorial Assistant/Registrar."]

SE: I remember Karen writing a lot of labeling though . . . and she acted--when did we start having tours, guided tours?

JB: That was with Karen and--

SE: While she was Registrar or later? I mean--

JB: No, she became Educator within--I think-- a year.

SE: OK, it's pretty soon then.

JB: Yeah, it's on the timeline, we can fill that in later . . . . Karen became the Educator and Marcie took over the Registrar's job. But you were still working for Patrick.

SE: Yeah, I basically worked for Patrick, I'd have to look at my dates here. I worked for Patrick half-time and then around [June or] July, they gave me the job of coordinating the Festival.

JB: In '77?

SE: Yeah.

JB: I [was] wondering how long, how much prep time you had for that first [Festival].

SE: Not very much, really, considering that it was the very first one, they had made very few contacts. We had a community meeting with people like John Outterbridge, and geez, I don't remember who was there. Rod Punt, who was then assistant director of [City of L.A.] Cultural Affairs, and Bill Reed from the County Parks and Recreation.

JB: So, from the very beginning, [there] was really . . . community involvement [in the Festival]?

SE: Oh yeah. Edith's vision was that we would have community groups performing and doing food and that the food booths would be basically run by nonprofit ethnic group organizations. And it didn't have to be that everything had masks in it, but that we had a full range of ethnicities engaged and that . . . the parade would have school groups and that there would be workshops, mask-making workshops, in the schools and parks and recreation centers and anywhere. I think there were even some [workshops] the year before, like at Wyle Labs, for employees. And there were a lot of--I think Security Pacific Bank volunteered-- their staff used it as a volunteer opportunity.

JB: I know they did later. I just realized there are two things I want to ask you before we go any further. One is: do you have any idea--I know you said you weren't there for the '76 parade--but did you ever hear--who actually coordinated that parade?

SE: Patrick.

JB: Oh, Patrick did that?

SE: Now, Bill Loomis may have been involved in that one, I don't remember.

JB: Bill Loomis--I don't remember him.

SE: He ran the two parades **[40:00]** that I was involved in. [He and his wife were professional parade organizers.] The thing that Edith was really annoyed with him about [was] he brought in all these cowboys and Indian riders and their horses and she just thought that was not what she wanted in her parade. Eventually we got rid of them. And Aaron started--you know--Willow hired Aaron to work with her.

JB: Aaron Paley?

SE: Aaron Paley, right, and he started doing the parades and--

JB: But he wasn't involved in the first one? . . . .

SE: No, he wasn't involved until Willow's second or third year [as Festival Coordinator]. [Aaron and his Community Arts Resources (CARS) organization produced the Festival of Masks parade and in 1988 Aaron was the Coordinator of the Festival itself.]

JB: The other thing I've been wondering about—[I've] been asking several people about this, is: do you know or did you ever hear Edith say where she got the idea? I know about the concept of the mask as being something that a lot of cultures use--not all but a lot of them--but I'm just wondering where that idea for using masks [as a focus for the Festival] came from. Had she seen that done somewhere else or?

SE: You know, she was really interested in a lot of cultures like Japanese culture and Mexican and . . . [others] that actually did have prominent masking traditions.

JB: And I think she had started to collect some of them.

SE: And she even had that Etruscan horse sculpture. Do you remember that in her house? It was mask-like.

JB: Yes, I guess I do.

SE: Ceramic--terra cotta--and it was a horse head that kind of was hollow inside and the eyes were open and the mouth was open and I always thought it looked mask-like. She always talked about it, and you'll see it--it's in her interview that's at the Archives of American Art. Also she talked about hearing Mayor Bradley--Tom Bradley--talk about L.A. having the most . . . different ethnic groups--"per square foot," she always said--than any other city in the United States [or in the world. . . . he might have said], "per square mile," I don't know, but [laughter] she always [insisted that he] said "per square foot." [I never heard it from anyone before Edith. She talked about it a lot.]

JB: . . . [Actually], that was talked about [by] a lot [of people] besides Edith.

SE: But anyway, that's how she got the idea for having a festival, a multiethnic festival, and I think the idea that different ethnicities [often] have different kinds of facial features, that using a mask would identify that as well--somehow identify with that as well. And also allow people to switch. She liked the idea of the transformation that masking allowed. And I think for somebody who was so unreligious, the spiritual concepts were interesting to her, were fascinating to her, the idea of being transformed or having powers that you wouldn't normally have. She liked the idea of the kinds of traditions where people would act out in spring or [certain winter holidays] . . . . The rest of the year they . . . [acted normally], but in springtime the boys got rowdy. [In European herding cultures, for instance, they would put sheep skins over their heads and backs and run roughshod through the town, lifting young women's skirts, and so on. Then they went back to observing cultural mores the next day.]

JB: She had a lot of people around her during The Egg and the Eye [gallery] days, some of whom lectured or did seminars at the Egg and the Eye, so she had certainly been exposed [to those concepts]. She knew people involved with the [UCLA Fowler] . . . Museum [of Cultural History] and so on. So she had been exposed to ideas about cultures, as well as exhibiting that kind of thing at the Egg and the Eye gallery. Maybe before we go any further now we ought to just go back and catch you up about your master's work.

SE: Oh. Well, I worked at John Parker and Associates, a hotel reservations company, for about--

JB: Part-time while you were working on your thesis.

SE: No, I was working full-time. I took a . . . [year off]. I mean I didn't go back to school for about a year and a half--two years--and then I started back in the second semester of whatever year it was. [Then I went to Princess Hotels part-time during grad school.] It must have been ’75. And by ’77 I was getting close to finishing, . . . I had to do my thesis, and so I was working on that probably right after the first Mask Festival in 1976 . . . . And Patrick lent me his truck [to haul materials for my thesis exhibition]. The poor guy. **[45:00]** I kept it for about three weeks and I built this installation piece in a gallery, a studio/gallery that this guy rented out on Washington Boulevard, and I just camped out in that studio and built this thing for two weeks.

JB: So it wasn't at Northridge?

SE: No. . . . You had limited space and time restrictions if you did it on campus, and I needed to do it off campus [to have the right space and time to build it]. How I found this guy I--maybe through David Weiss, who by then I was dating and who helped me--

JB: The glass artist? No, that was Dick Weiss.

SE: --build it. No, his brother--

JB: Oh, he was his brother? Oh.

SE: Dick Weiss [the glass artist] is his brother and David [Weiss, who I was dating,] was an engineer, facilities engineer with . . . . one of those big aerospace companies. . . . [It was Hughes Aircraft.] And I was going around to different places trying to get funding for . . . [my project]. I never did, but he saw me--

JB: For your installation?

SE: Yeah. Because it was built into a room. It was tunnels that were built into a room.

JB: I'm trying to remember. I think I did actually come to see that. I have a vague--

SE: I'm sure you must have. Everybody did at the museum.

JB: You invited everybody, yeah. I remember the tunnels now that you mention it.

SE: You had to bend down to get into them and turn sideways to get out the other end. And the light traveled through. Anyway it was basically wall construction, wall and ceiling construction, and so David knew how to do that because he'd spent his whole life--growing up, his dad built houses and rented them--that's how they made their living . . . . David had grown up building houses and he was the one who helped me build this thing. I don't know what I would have done if he hadn't showed up. My mother calls him "my miracle man." Or she did. So basically, that's how we did it. And I got my degree in '78 and by then I was Program Aide probably. Let's see--

JB: You continued to be Patrick's administrative assistant during the time that you first worked on the Festival of Masks [in 1977], and I guess if Patrick . . . worked on the parade to begin with--that makes sense, that you basically started out helping him. Is that the way it happened?

SE: . . . . [No, he was not working on the parade or festival at that point except to raise money for it.]

JB: And you just pretty much--you took it over.

SE: And then I took another 20 hours for which I was paid. So I was working full-time and being paid for half of it for the next six months [of 1977] . After that I got paid full-time. So I volunteered 20 hours a week for a whole year probably.

JB: And then you did the Festival again in '78.

SE: Yes, I did.

JB: After you had finished your--I guess did you get your degree then in June or July of ['78] after your thesis exhibition was put up? And then you--now in '78--you had a better idea of what you were doing, I assume--

SE: I did.

JB: --with the Festival.

SE: And I had a lot of--I think the first year we only did one day, and the second year we did two days.

JB: . . . . The first two years of the Festival were just one day on Sunday, at least that's--where did I get that information? I think it was on the posters. . . . [In 1978, the Festival became a two-day event, Saturday, October 28, and Sunday, October 29.]

SE: What I remember is we went from one day to two days and then we added a Friday night Masked Ball.

JB: That was a little later.

SE: That was probably ’79. [The first "Maskerade Ball" was held October 27, 1979.]

JB: That was like the fourth [year] or--yeah. [In 1976 there was a small parade only, just a few blocks long. There was no festival as such. Participants were from school and park department workshops and the CalArts Gamelan Orchestra played in front of the museum.

SE: But I think [that in 1979] I was still coordinating and to a certain degree I was still in charge [in 1979] even though it says on your timeline . . . . that Willow took over. She was mainly doing it, but I was still supervising it, I think.

JB: Oh, OK.

SE: And the reason I'm . . . thinking that is because I remember this progression from one day to two days to a Friday night in addition.

JB: . . . . I did recently come up with a list of just the festival dates and what was added when, and I'll send that to you, but the information that I have-- is that the [first and second festivals in ’76 and ’77] . . . were just one day, but then a [second] day was added **[50:00]** . . . .

SE: Yeah, Saturday and Sunday. [The second day was added in 1978.]

JB: They had just been on Sunday to begin with [in 1976 and 1977], and then the Saturday was added in [1978].

SE: She actually came in--

JB: I think she was assisting you--

SE: In ’78. She was [organizing] the performances.

JB: Then your roles were sort of switched.

SE: Yeah, we sort of moved, yeah. She kind of moved more in charge [of the Festival] and I moved into the [museum] programming, exhibition programming, more and more.

JB: And then I think it wasn't until the year after that in ’79 . . . that the Maskerade Ball was added . . . . ["Masquerade" was always spelled "Maskerade" by the producers.] Actually, I think it was on Saturday to begin with. Anyway, I'll send that [list] to you and then you can--if you have any other remembrances about it--you can add to that.

So in ’79 you were moving away from the Festival, . . . and I guess we all got involved in the Festival to one extent or another--at least as volunteers to help out on the weekend itself--but you were still pretty involved--

SE: Yeah, I was very involved.

JB: --in ’78 and ’79. But at that point you did--maybe it wasn't until after the ['79] Festival was over, you did segué from being Patrick’s assistant to being Edith’s assistant.

SE: Yeah.

JB: How did that--do you remember how that happened?

SE: I was always working on installations anyway.

JB: Oh, you were?

SE: Yeah . . . . Edith decided she needed an assistant and she wanted me. So I became Program Aide.

JB: Was there someone else sort of waiting in the wings to be Patrick’s assistant at that time? I was trying to remember.

SE: I don’t know. I don’t think so.

JB: And being the Administrative Assistant --

SE: And I don’t know at which point I actually gave up doing--

JB: The Festival?

SE: No, not the Festival. Doing membership and mailings. I mean I did a lot--not just the Festival. That wasn't my only job ever.

JB: Well, no. I mean I assumed when you were Administrative Assistant that you did a lot of other work. But did it involve, I mean--

SE: I guess Sally what's-her-name came in. Do you remember Sally?

JB: Sally Cullman?

SE: Came in maybe in ’78 or ’79, somewhere in there, and took over membership [in 1980].

JB: OK, but there was always someone else, I think, who did the basic secretarial work.

SE: Oh yeah, there was always a secretary [who worked for both Edith and Patrick]. Merat Kebede? and Lisi Rona? and Brenda Hurst.

JB: But even at the beginning there was [someone]?

SE: Yeah. I think--who was there? Maybe it was Brenda there in the beginning? The woman that had been there so long had left--

JB: Mac [Mary Ann Cisar-Tighe].

SE: Mac was never there when I was there.

JB: I think she had just left at the end of ’75 or the beginning of ’76. [Mac was still listed as secretary when the March 1976 *CAFAM Newsletter* was published.]

SE: There were a couple of people. And there was someone who maybe was before Brenda or after Brenda.

JB: There was someone who I remember [laughter]--what was memorable about her was that she said she had been Marilyn Monroe’s secretary, and I don’t remember what her name was, but she was there--not for very long--but a few months anyway. [And Patrick had to fire her. She was Edith's secretary, but they didn't get along, and Patrick was told he had to let her go. He told me it was very hard to do.]

SE: That's interesting.

JB: And then I think Merat might have been the next one and then Brenda after that.

SE: And then there was a young woman that was there for a while, too, who was kind of--she had a boyfriend she was living with. I can't think what her name was. I can see her face though. She was there for awhile.

JB: But you were never involved with real secretarial duties, answering the phone or filing or that kind of thing?

SE: No, not really. And in fact, eventually I was using the secretary, sharing the secretary too, when I could. [Starting in July 1977, I did 20 hours a week of volunteer work on membership; then I was paid for an additional 20 hours a week to do the Festival. I believe I was paid full-time starting in 1978.]

JB: But you did continue with membership for a while.

SE: And that involved using a computer. That was my first experience with a computer and it was still DOS. . . . I was printing out labels when I did membership.

JB: We didn't actually have a [personal] computer [at the museum until at least 1984].

SE: We did. **[55:00]** It was in the library too, in the original little library room [on the third floor of the museum]. I worked in there. . . .

JB: Well, there was a [computer that was a dedicated] word processor, [the IBM Displaywriter] that Max used [in the cottage], that was actually the first computer that [I knew about]--yeah, it was a

big clunky thing--but it worked very well for graphic design, for signage and [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] making labels. [We got that from the Getty . . . . I worked with Max on the ARLIS/NA conference publications on the Displaywriter in 1984, so I guess we got it before that.]

SE: Yeah, setting type and stuff like that. Yeah, that was the one I used.

JB: So you worked on that?

SE: Yeah. I learned how to do that. When I went to the [American Craft Museum in '84 and the] Hudson River Museum--in ’86 I guess it was--I already knew how to use a computer and I already had one of my own [at home] by then too. So that was kind of cool.

JB: Yeah, at home we had gotten an Osborne [in 1984]. Did you have something like that--one of the first portable computers?

SE: Well, when we moved to New York, I think I used--actually I used an IBM computer that Roz Tunis’s husband was [able to get for us]. He worked for IBM and they lived down the street from us [in Dobbs Ferry]. Roz is a curator. Anyway, she did a show that came to . . . [CAFAM], and that's how I got to know her, and I still know her. I used [her husband's computer] for a while--I borrowed it for a while, and then I decided I needed my own. I was working on an American Craft Council project [and I was able to use the ACC magazine's computer.

JB: I remember that. That was when you were in New York.

SE: Yeah, in New York. [We lived in Dobbs Ferry and I commuted to the city by train.]

JB: Let’s see, I guess--well I have a question here but I think you've answered it. Was there a position opening that you applied for at CAFAM?

SE: No. I just moved up [from being a volunteer]. Edith just always liked working with me for some reason and I guess I tolerated everything pretty well and all the changes and I worked hard and I didn't mind staying late and, you know--I'm very process-oriented, which suited her very well.

JB: Just working on one thing at a time, you mean?

SE: No.

JB: Or just getting things done?

SE: Moving through. I like the process of doing, so the end result is never quite as important as getting there, I mean as doing it. And Edith was always making changes. [It's an aspect of perfectionism.]

JB: Yes, so she needed that time.

SE: Yeah, she needed me to be flexible, and since I was totally into making, you know, in that kind of process stuff, that was fun for me, personality-wise, I was tolerant of that. Now, people who aren't process-oriented--

JB: Who are goal-oriented.

SE: Goal-oriented, yeah, she'd drive them nuts.

JB: I remember--

SE: Like Carol. Remember Carol, the Preparator?

JB: Oh, Carol Fulton, yeah.

SE: She drove Carol nuts because Carol was goal-oriented. She wanted to get things done. And none of us, the rest of us weren't.

JB: I remember coming up [to the gallery], as most of us did, the afternoon of an opening and--I don't know--we had to sweep the floor, or do some last-minute painting or something, there was always something, and I remember doing whatever it was, and Edith looking over at me and just saying, "I'm just so glad when people will just do what needs to be done." You know, and not make a big deal out of it, just do it.

SE: Yeah, that's what she felt was required.

JB: And it was.

SE: And I was--that's the way I grew up, you know?

JB: In those circumstances.

SE: That's the way I grew up, doing what needed to be done, and kind of wanting to hang out with people and--

JB: --that were doing it.

SE: Yeah. And you know, I learned a lot about exhibition design from her and from Bernard [Kester]--but I also had a lot of my own three-dimensional ideas, and I was good with color. You know, I liked color. Still do. And so, you know, it was a neat thing.

JB: Let's take a short break.

SE: OK. **[Recorder paused.]**

JB: OK, we're back and you just reminded me, Shan, that there was more work to be done in basic organizing, I guess you'd say, for the 1977 Festival, the first [full-scale] Festival. The parade had been organized by Patrick [in 1976]. So what did you have available when you started in July--did you say-- in '77? . . . . What was in place at that time and what did you have to add?

SE: Well, Edith and Patrick **[1:00:00]** had made arrangements to have the City Cultural Affairs Department and the County Parks and Recreation Department collaborate, be co-sponsors.

JB: So both of them were involved? The City and the County?

SE: Yes, [from the beginning] and they provided . . . booths for the vendors and the stage. We had one stage the first year.

JB: Now, I know it was across the street in Hancock Park. Was there any problem in getting that space?

SE: No, because it was a County park and they were co-sponsoring. [They were very involved with the process.]

JB: You just had to reserve it.

SE: Yeah, and the original parade, I believe, just went from . . . [Ogden Avenue, just east of Fairfax, about four blocks to the Museum, which was just west of Curson.] It wasn't very long. [It ended in front of the museum.] And then when I came along, we turned it into a mile-long parade, so it went much further. . . .

JB: You don't remember where it turned around? [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

SE: [When in 1977 the Festival began to happen in Hancock Park, it would turn on] Curson--it would go into [Hancock] Park from there. [The entrance to the park was just above Wilshire at Curson.] They would go right into the park.

JB: But you said it got longer than that.

SE: When it got longer it may have started--one year I think it started at San Vicente and came [east] to Curson. Another year it might have started at La Brea . . . [and come west to Curson].

JB: But it ended at Curson [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

SE: It always ended going into the park. She wanted people to process through the park, Edith did. So I had--and you know, there had been maybe 20 or 30 groups in that first--

JB: In the parade?

SE: In that parade. And a lot of them were children from schools and Carthay Circle was one . . . .

JB: That was the neighboring --

SE: --elementary school.

JB: Neighborhood, yeah.

SE: [For the first parade in 1976], Parks and Recreation had classes in the park [recreation centers] and some of those groups would come, and there were a few ethnic [organizations]. I just don't

remember who they were. Maybe Self-Help Graphics--I think [they] participated--and did some Day of the Dead kind of thing. And it was held for a long, long time on the last weekend in October, the closest weekend to Halloween that we could get--which irritated people who didn't feel that their traditions had anything to do with Halloween. It was great for the Hispanic groups and some of those people who did All Saint's Day and stuff like that. But for people whose masking traditions were in the winter or in the spring or whatever, they didn't usually like being associated with [Halloween]. But [weather-wise] it was a perfect time of year, the weather was always just right, and even if it rained the week before, it never rained on our parade.

JB: I think one day--there was one time that it rained [in the early morning], but it wasn't all day.

SE: Yeah.

JB: So the City and the County were involved from the beginning.

SE: Right, and then I had to go and find enough people to perform and people to do food booths. So the way I started out was there were the few groups that had already been involved, and then I went to the consulates. I went down the list of every single consulate, and said, "Is there a group here who performs or would make food?" and they would give me references and I followed up on every single one. . . .

JB: That's a lot of telephone time.

SE: A lot of telephone time, a lot of time spent with the performers, showing them that we really were interested, going and watching their rehearsals, or watching them perform at other festivals around town or--

JB: Now, was there anyone else helping you in that first year, '77?

SE: No.

JB: You were really--

SE: I was it.

JB: Wow. So . . . was Edith feeding you these ideas? Was all of this part of her vision--

SE: Yes.

JB: --to have performances and food booths and so on?

SE: Yes.

JB: And this--

SE: And we also had people who sold masks and things like that.

JB: Demonstrated things.

SE: Yeah.

JB: You know, I was thinking [about] the food booths. I remember how much fun that was, and then later on after we began to see what they called food courts in malls, you know--that doesn't seem so interesting. But at the time, in the late 70s, that idea that **[1:05:00]** you could go to a [single] place and sample all of these--what we considered at the time to be exotic foods--was a fabulous idea.

SE: You know, the City and County already had festivals around town, but they were generally for one ethnic group at a time.

JB: Yeah, talk about that. I mean I had the impression that the Festival of Masks was one of the first multi-ethnic [festivals].

SE: I think so. I mean there were maybe Asian Pacific, you know, like the--in Echo Park they always had the Lotus Festival and that was a multi-Asian thing. I just remember going to a few around in different parks, pretty far away from where we were, and they were generally oriented toward a particular group. Day of the Dead . . . and Pacific Asia--the Asian ones are the ones I remember the most. [Also the German Oktoberfest.] But, anyway, so that's what I did. I was a really good researcher. Oxy taught me well how to do that and I was good at talking--

JB: But not library research . . . .

SE: No, I was digging up people.

JB: Because we didn't have the Internet then either.

SE: No, I was digging up people. I'm a good--you know--I was very social, like I said. In college I was-- what did they call that? Director of social events, or something, one year for the student council.

JB: Social director?

SE: Yeah. I did all the [student government-sponsored] social events for one year and my friend did it the year before, so I helped her. We developed all kinds of things that Oxy had never done before. But it was a bad time because a lot of people considered us frivolous because the [Vietnam] War was still a big deal. But, anyway, I knew how to do that kind of stuff. I started organizing events in high school really.

JB: So you had good preparation [for your work on the Festival].

SE: I just had an instinct about what to do and did it. I don’t know if somebody [at the museum] said, "call the consulates," and I said, "oh, that's a good idea," and I did it, or if I thought of it by myself, but I spent a lot of time with that phone book on the phone and people seemed to, you know, they

didn't question me. I know I sounded young--I was young--and I think I sounded and looked younger than I was.

JB: But the timing [of the first Festival of Masks], I think, was quite good in spite of the [continued fighting in Southeast Asia] . . . . There was beginning to be [wider] interest [in folk art; people were traveling and bringing back folk art souvenirs, textiles and masks and things like that].

SE: Oh yeah, there was already a lot of interest. [But I was] talking about [when I was] at Occidental. That's when--you know--the height of the War happened right then. [Richard Nixon started a process of "Vietnamization" of the War: U.S. troop withdrawals began in 1969; direct U.S. military involvement ended on August 15,1973, and the fall of Saigon happened in April 1975. But yes, in 1977, when the Festival of Masks was being developed, there was a lot of interest in the Festival's mission, in world cultures.]

JB: . . . . We were in Canada for part of that time [1971 – 1973] so my history of that time is a little fuzzy.

SE: [One thing] I remember is my brother, who was two years younger, turned 18 around that time [February 1971] and he was going to--

JB: Was he drafted?

SE: No, but he got his first draft number and it was number three.

JB: Oh my God.

SE: So he went out and burned the rose bushes at Cal Poly with his friends.

JB: He burned the rose bushes?

SE: He got drunk and burned the rose bushes at Cal Poly. It turned out he'd broken, he'd had his jaw broken quite badly when he was playing baseball in high school and he also had flat feet so they wouldn't take him.

JB: Thank goodness.

SE: But he really tried hard to get out before he knew he didn't have to worry about it. Anyway that's when I'm doing all these social events on a college campus that was seriously engaged in civil rights and antiwar issues. Having a "casino night" seemed really frivolous to [some of] them at the time [1969 – 1973]. But a lot of people participated [in the social events], and they're still doing some of the events we started. So anyway--you know, I'd done concerts and things like that already.

And [when I started working on the first Festival in 1977], I just dug people up and then I went and talked to them and I had a real loyal following. People—Ukrainians--they would bring me gifts at--a Ukrainian lady always brought me gifts at Easter and, you know, things like that.

JB: So you were obviously doing a lot of community outreach.

SE: Yeah, and we had community meetings and everybody--all the performers--would come and we'd talk about what was going on. Sometimes there were issues about Edith being too directorial about what they had to do, and not as much input from them as they would have liked, and we had to deal with that. And one time I said something, I can't even remember--

JB: And Edith came to most all of the meetings.

SE: Oh, she did, definitely. **[1:10:00]** Especially [in] the first two years. And I remember saying something and I have no idea of what it was I said or what the subject was, but Edith just yelled at me. That meant I had to go around mending fences [then] with everybody who didn't like that she yelled at me, and keep them pulled in. So I had to do some of that too. Because she could get--you know--she had a temper sometimes.

JB: You got along very well with her obviously--

SE: Yeah.

JB: --but there must have been more than one of those kinds of moments.

SE: I quit one day.

JB: Oh, you did?

SE: Yeah.

JB: Do you remember when that was?

SE: Yeah.

JB: What were the circumstances?

SE: I remember it really well. Do you remember the Korean show, the Korean folk art show? [Guardians of Happiness: A Shamanistic Approach to Korean Folk Art; opened May 18, 1982.] . . . . This guy lived in Korea. He was an academic kind of guy who collected Korean folk art and I remember this giant tiger mural that we had in the Annex gallery. [The curator's name was Horay Zo-zayong; he was the Director of the Emileh Museum in Seoul, Korea.]

JB: I remember that too . . . . And there was a catalog that had the tiger on it, I think. [The catalog, whose title was *Guardians of Happiness: Shamanistic Tradition in Korean Folk Painting*, had two dragons on the cover.]

SE: Yeah. I don't remember the catalog, and I don't have it.

JB: I think it had been produced somewhere else but then there was a title page made for the Craft and Folk Art Museum.

SE: Maybe. Anyway he was a little bit—well, what happened that I remember is Edith was negotiating with him. He had come here I think, or she had met him when she was there, probably both, and then there was a new ambassador, and the ambassador's wife, whose name I don't remember, was also involved in cultural things, folk art, Asian art, and she wanted to do an exhibition, and she kind of tried to pull strings to keep us from having ours because it would happen before hers and she wanted hers to make the big splash. And hers was going to be a different kind of show, it wasn't really a folk art show as far as I can recall. In fact, I met her . . . finally [at an ArtTable gathering at MOMA] when we lived in New York and I said, "Oh, I worked at the Craft and Folk Art Museum and I know you from that time and the Korean show we did," and she said, "I don't even want to talk about it." She said, "Please don't bring it up."

JB: Oh my.

SE: So something really awful happened, but because she was the ambassador's wife, she could make trouble. And then I don't know what he did, but he ended up going off to some cave that he had in the mountains, and hiding for awhile. And so the objects did not arrive on time.

JB: This is the one that the truck arrived--

SE: --at the opening. We scheduled it when we knew it was finally there [in customs] . . . . We made them [the delivery company] come at 6:00 pm or whatever it was. Actually,, by the time they arrived with the boxes, we'd already, I think, had a performance by a Korean shaman that lived here, a woman, in the empty gallery. [I have a vague image in my head of her dancing on a crate also.] . . . .

JB: Go ahead.

SE: And so anyway [when] we were all ready for the objects and there were no objects, and we knew they weren't going to be there on time, and I was trying to get Edith to go--

JB: Guardians of Happiness.

SE: Yeah. And I kept saying to Edith, "You have to go to Korea and work this out because things aren't working here; you have to go. No, she was not going to go to Korea. And I said, "Edith, you have to go, you know, we're not going to have a show." And so at that point I was hiring preparators, especially for when we had installation time. The whole museum was closed when we installed both galleries at the same time, and this [show was] . . . actually [in] three galleries, two at the main building and then we had [a gallery in] the Annex across the street, above the ABC carpet store.

JB: Thank goodness.

SE: Yeah. And so this was going to be a wonderful giant show and when the stuff arrived, she wanted--I mean I was already so stressed out by it--

JB: I can imagine. You were expecting it at least a week and a half or two before.

SE: Oh yeah, two weeks before at least. We would have liked to have it even way more than that. And so I had these preparators working, but one of them was on staff at that point, and then one or two I hired, and she wanted me to have them working around the clock and I said, "No, I'm not going to do that." We often worked late at night. I mean I [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] -- **[1:15:00]**

JB: . . . . She was used to doing that at the Egg and the Eye gallery.

SE: Oh yeah, because she did everything herself.

JB: She and John Browse.

SE: Well, what I mean is, she supervised and did everything. I mean it was nobody else. She didn't like to give up that much control either, although sometimes she did at the wrong time--but anyway. [laughter] It was too late to do anything. But she was really mad at me for not making them work till midnight every night or something, and I said, "You know, it's really dangerous. It's not good for the objects, and these are--you know--look how far they've come, and the guys are tired already, they've been working for two weeks, long hours already, and I'm not going to make them work late.

JB: That was brave of you to say that to her.

SE: I said, "It's not my fault." And she was, "Yes, you're going to do this." I said, "Edith, it's not my fault that these things came late." "Yes, it is." You know, it's like she was just being--she was throwing a temper tantrum and I wasn't--

JB: She was being [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] --

SE: And I was being rigid.

JB: Which she wasn't used to.

SE: No, she wasn't used to me being rigid. And I just wasn't going to do it. The guys, by then--at that point in time--it was really hard to make people work all that time so often. We were changing shows every three weeks or four weeks at the max.

JB: There were a lot of shows going on each year during that time.

SE: And sometimes we'd have two or three different ones opening at the same time. If we did that, we tried to offset them so we could have one gallery open, but you know, then you would be working four weeks in a row. It was a two-week installation almost always--and painting and building and moving walls and, you know, it was really intense. And sometimes we were painting murals on the walls that just got covered up three weeks later. Building in little dioramas and like--for the Japanese show--when we had toys we built a little--

JB: You carried sand upstairs for the Japanese folk art [show].

SE: No, wasn't that for Afghanistan, where we carried sand upstairs? . . . . Oh, you're thinking of maybe Noguchi, when we had the Noguchi lanterns. We put sand downstairs.

JB: That was down in the first floor gallery, but there was a tea room upstairs--

SE: A tea room, that's right. Did we put sand around that too?

JB: Noguchi was downstairs in the first floor gallery.

SE: Did we put sand . . . upstairs?

JB: The Japanese folk art show was upstairs and there was a small tea room and I thought that the floor was made of sand. [The floor was tatami mats, not sand.]

SE: We might have done a dry garden, we might have done a sand garden, rock garden, or something. [We did a small sand garden on one side of the tea room, in a narrow space next to the wall.]

JB: Something like that. But by that time, you were Senior Curator.

SE: Yeah.

JB: So, talk a little bit about--now we just talked about how you organized the first Festival and got all these groups involved.

SE: And I want to say that when Willow came on, she really knew how to do the performing, organize the performances, and by then we had two stages [for the Festival], and she really took that on, and brought in some fantastic performers from UCLA and Cal Arts because she--

JB: Well, she was getting her degree in the--what was it called?

SE: World Arts and Cultures now, but I don't think it was quite called that then.

JB: No, it was something else, but it was basically that. [Ethnic Arts.] And dance--that was involved.

SE: She was dancing and a lot of her friends were dancing . . . . also the thing that she did, with Edith's encouragement--was to make all the performances masked. And almost everybody in the parade had to wear a mask.

JB: Interesting. So Willow was more favorable to that?

SE: I wasn't against it. It was just a matter of finding [the organizations that performed in masks]. And there were some cultures you weren't going to get that from. So at first it was just cover everybody [as many ethnic groups as possible], and then it got more and more into masking . . . .

JB: [Willow didn't start] until '78, I think.

SE: Yeah, I think [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] late [August, when the school term started in '78

JB: But at some point before the Festival, you had to get people on the staff involved--so you had had these community meetings and getting--

SE: Well, Brenda Hurst did a lot of stuff. I think whoever was secretary had to do some writing and typing for me. Patrick and Lorraine helped with grants. Edith always had something to say. The [City of L.A.] Cultural Affairs Department **[1:20:00]**, and actually Bill Reed at County Parks, he facilitated a huge, huge amount of stuff, especially workshops. He was really, really wonderful.

JB: I remember him as being a very, very nice person, very helpful.

SE: Yeah.

JB: But then the staff itself was asked to volunteer at least during the Festival.

SE: Yeah, that's right. And sometimes we did exhibitions with the Festival too.

JB: Oh, yes, absolutely.

SE: Mask exhibitions. So everybody worked on that. And the staff had to man booths or help with the performers, get them on and off stage or--

JB: I think there was actually a volunteer coordinator, who was sort of in charge of that. [overlapping dialogue; inaudible]

SE: I don't know if Suzy Ticho was still there at that time.

JB: Yes, she was. She was a [Volunteer Coordinator and a] volunteer herself.

SE: Right, and then we hired somebody at some point. But I really don't remember depending on anybody too much for that, for staffing that totally. I mean, I grabbed my friends and made them do it, and whoever we could get--the regular volunteers, as well as everybody's friends.

JB: Let's just wind up the talk about the Festival by--describe to me--as if I didn't know anything about it--when you were watching the parade, and you followed the parade into the . . . [Festival] grounds, what would you see and what [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] impressions [did you have]?

SE: Along the fence to the Page Museum [of the LaBrea Discoveries], there would be food booths in a big row, and then out in the--I think the first stage was opposite that across the grassy area more towards the County Museum--Art Museum, facing the Page. And then in between there were booths where people were selling things like masks and jewelry and stuff.

JB: Now, it just occurred to me, you of course had to do the publicity for this, although I think Nina Green was working [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

SE: Nina did the publicity.

JB: You had to feed--

SE: I fed her stuff certainly and I wrote grant narratives and things like that.

JB: It turned out to be an amazing, very long-lived event, that I think now is--I don't even know if they're still trying to do something that they call the Festival of Masks, but it's nothing [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] like it was.

SE: Is Maryna her [the Director's] first name?

JB: Maryna [Hrushetska, CAFAM's Executive Director, started in 2005].

SE: When Maryna first started, she wanted to redo it, but I think it's going to be hard to do in this day and age. [The cultural environment is] a whole different thing now.

JB: It is, isn't it?

SE: I mean the need for it may still exist, but I don't think the cultural--somehow it's not, I don't know--maybe it's just because I'm old and I'm not involved any more but [laughter]--it doesn't seem culturally appropriate at the moment. I mean not—"appropriate" isn't the word--but culturally--

JB: Relevant?

SE: Yeah, it's not as--it's different, the needs now are different than they used to be--and there's so much world music and so much more--you know--people travel, and all colleges send probably a third to half of their students to some other campus in Europe or Asia or Africa or somewhere, South America, you know. Their kids are studying all over the place.

JB: Yes, well, even when the Festival was still a pretty active going concern in the 80s, there had already started to be more ethnically-specific museums and other institutions that put on events. I know that was one of the things that Edith was always--I don't think she was sorry that those things sprang up--but she, I think, felt a sense of competition with them.

SE: Yeah, because--well, for funding, for membership. I mean it was very hard to maintain a multicultural membership because you'd have a show [devoted to one group] **[1:25:00]** and then . . . [not have] another one [until maybe] three or four years later, and people would come around for the one show and you'd get the consulates and all that, but they weren't that engaged in anybody else's cultures. [Actually, except for Japan and Mexico or Hispanic themes, CAFAM seldom mounted more than one exhibition devoted to the same culture.] And there were people who specifically were interested in that, but that was a small group compared to what you needed to [support the museum] . . . . There was the time when the state wanted to do an ethnic museum of some sort, and we were up for that designation, to be a state museum and --

JB: I don't remember that.

SE: Oh yeah, it was while I was still Curator. What ended up getting chosen was the Afro-American museum.

JB: So--that's why it was [called] the California Afro-American Museum?

SE: That's right, that's a state museum even still, I think.

JB: Yes, it is. But I didn't realize that they were considering other--

SE: Yeah, they considered a Hispanic museum. I think there was one already kind of fledgling Hispanic museum somewhere.

JB: Do you remember what [California] department . . . that was?

SE: No, I don't. And it might have come through [the] California--what is it, Council on the Arts?

JB: Or the Humanities.

SE: On the Arts?

JB: Or on the arts, yeah.

SE: One or the other.

JB: That's interesting.

SE: There was somebody in the legislature that was into it. I don't remember what the story was. But there seemed to be a lot of-- it seemed to be--for some reason, it was a moment when the state wanted to fund a museum, an ethnic museum.

JB: There was a [state] folk arts program at that time that had a head who was more active then—Barbara, I think her first name was--[Barbara Rahm].

SE: Oh, in the city.

JB: No, on the state level. She was very active in the folklore society, the American Folklore Society, and she got the position of head of folk arts, I've forgotten exactly what the title was but it was a California state position.

SE: Oh yeah, maybe I remember that.

JB: And she, I think, was very active in that, I can imagine that she might have been involved with the [museum choice]. So we haven't talked about any of the specific [CAFAM] exhibitions. We touched on [a few, but] no, I don't think we really have.

SE: No, not really.

JB: And I guess before we do that, we ought to say that--I guess it was in 19--

SE: In '79 when I became Assistant to the Program Director, and then in '81, I guess, I got my title as Senior Curator.

JB: In ’81 you became Senior Curator. Just talk about that a little bit, how that came to be. Did you come up with that idea? I mean [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] [the idea of the title].

SE: I think originally--actually I don’t have it on my resumé because it just seemed like too many titles--but before I was assistant to the Program Director, I was called Program Aide, and that was my title when I was doing the Mask Festival--besides Coordinator.

JB: That makes sense, I guess.

SE: A Program Aide. And by the time I got the title change I felt like I was doing a lot more. I was already coordinating exhibitions and helping choose things. I mean I was in a lot of ways an Administrative Assistant for Edith, but I was already designing exhibitions and a lot more, so I said, "Can I have a better title than Program Aide? it doesn't sound like much to me; I'm doing a lot more than that." And so she gave me the title Assistant to the Program Director, and then at a certain point, I was organizing exhibitions pretty much on my own, and she wanted to have a Curator--I mean I don’t know whose idea it was to give me the title Senior Curator, but it meant that--that's at the time that Willow also became Curator of [Special] Events or something--Special Events. Because she was running the Mask Festival and she would get involved--

JB: I know she was in charge of special events. I don’t remember--

SE: Curator was her title. And then Education Curator. [This was after Karen Copeland left and before Janet Marcus was hired as Education Curator in 1982.] So that's why I became Senior Curator.

JB: I see. Well, it made absolute sense, and you did actually curate the glass show that you did in 1980, but, now let’s see--yes, and that was the first show that you curated, and then it was in the fall of that year that you did the contemporary mask show . . . . But talk a little bit about the glass show, because the people, the **[1:30:00]** "four leaders in glass" were Dale Chihuly, Richard Marquis, Therman Statom, and Dick Weiss and, as we all know, most of them are very well-known, and Chihuly especially now--

SE: Chihuly is like Mr. Glass.

JB: Yes, he certainly is. And this was just the beginning of 1980--you must have been preparing for it in ’79. So how did that come about?

SE: We were doing the PIC committee. Do you remember the PIC committee?

JB: Yes, Bernard [Kester was involved]. [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

SE: Programmatic Input Committee. Edith loved puns and acronyms. So we had the PIC committee, and it was Mary Jane Leland and Bernard Kester and, I think, Dextra Frankel may have been on it for awhile.

JB: And Josine for a while.

SE: And Josine [Ianco-Starrells] and--

JB: Gere [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] --

SE: Yeah, Gere Kavanaugh. I don't remember who else right now, but it was a pretty significant group of people. And so I would just take all the proposals that had come in from traveling exhibition services and artist slides and whatever it was and we'd kind of go through them and sometimes we'd have a separate idea and sometimes we wouldn't. At one point, because I was still seeing David at that time--David Weiss--his brother sent me slides. I knew his brother by then, I'd visited him in his home in Seattle, and knew his family very well. So Dick sent slides and I said at the PIC meeting, " I'm going to show you these slides, but I want you to know I have a conflict of interest. He's a friend of mine."

JB: Not that that had ever made any difference in any CAFAM relationships.

SE: No. It wouldn't have made any difference at all, but anyway . . . So--we looked at Dick's slides--and Dick actually still does major commissions. The Seattle airport has these gigantic windows that he did. He does leaded glass.

JB: Oh--I must have seen those and not realized they were by him.

SE: Yeah, the work he showed in Four Leaders in Glass was very geometric, very squared off. And the ones that he did for Seattle are very much the opposite. They went from minimal to maximal and organic and colorful in a very different way.

JB: I do remember that now. It's just before you get on the escalator to--

SE: You know, I've never seen them actually, [only in pictures]. I haven't been there since they put them in.

JB: You said they were--

SE: They're huge.

JB: Yes, I do remember and yes, they are very different from what [was in the CAFAM show] --

SE: Yeah, very different. That happens, you know.

JB: Yeah, sure.

SE: You know, who I always think about is Frank Stella, who went from those black paintings with plain canvas lines to these baroque things he does now.

JB: If an artist grows--

SE: --or just gets bored with what they're doing and needs something else to do.

JB: So you had been to Seattle and it seemed--

SE: Yeah, I knew Dick's work, and I just said, "Here are the slides, I don't want to make any commentary on them, they're for you to see, that's it." And then Bernard started talking about this young man he'd met in Washington at the Renwick Gallery, Dale Chihuly.

JB: Down in DC?

SE: Yeah, Dale Chihuly, and how impressive he was and his work was. And we all knew Dick Marquis was at UCLA at the time and he of course--

JB: He had started the hot glass studio there, I think.

SE: Yes. And anyway, we came up with the idea of having people who worked in different areas of glass, different kinds of ways of working in glass. [Four Leaders in Glass; opened January 29, 1980.] We had a leaded glassmaker [Weiss]; we had Chihuly doing the kind of blown glass he did and also running a big studio; and Marquis doing these little-- well, the techniques were different. You know—[the] little, tiny, fussy techniques he was using.

JB: Was some of it what they call flameware?

SE: Flame work?

JB: Some of them were figurines kind of.

SE: Yeah, he probably used some flame work, but I think a lot of what he did was this *millefiori*.

JB: Oh, yes.

SE: Which means--which is the Italian for millions of flowers or something, a thousand flowers, but it's the little tiny things **[1:35:00]** they make, and then put together in a pattern like a quilt . . .

JB: Yes.

SE: And so he developed that, he learned that technique in Venice, and he was at the time probably the only American artist that really had--

JB: Marquis you're talking about?

SE: Yeah, Marquis, that had mastered it.

JB: Chihuly went to Italy, too, of course then later.

SE: Yes, he did.

JB: But Marquis was there before?

SE: I don't know. I don't know when they went related to each other, but Marquis is maybe older than Chihuly actually. I don't know. He's been around for some time. Anyway, he was working in that very tiny kind of detailed work, and Chihuly was blowing these very amorphous kind of shapes

and had seashell and fiber motifs in them. And so I was charged with finding a sculptor that worked differently than the three of them. And Dick Weiss sent me this article on Therman [Statom], and it just knocked me out, what I saw, the pictures in that--

JB: And he was in LA, wasn't he?

SE: No, he was not in LA. [He was . . . living in the Williamsburg section of New York City, which is in Brooklyn.] He was [from] Washington DC, I think. That's where he grew up. His father was a doctor in Washington DC and Therman was like a tramp [at the time]. I mean he just came in all dirty [clothes] and looked at you out the sides of his eyes. He kind of looked at you sideways and wasn't very articulate. Didn't ever have any money at all and needed help to even--he couldn't transport his stuff--it was too hard to transport, so he had to come and build it here, make it all here. So he came six months early just to make the work, and he had to borrow money to make it.

JB: That's where I got the idea that he lived in LA because he was living in LA while he was preparing [for the show].

SE: Right, Dick Marquis helped him out. I mean he ingratiated [himself] to everybody and it unfortunately didn't always turn out the best. But then he set up shop here, he did for a while, next to Kerry Feldman. They had studios next to each other out in, I guess it was Venice. Some warehouse area in Venice. And so I found him and I just really loved the work and it was very simple and it was his first museum show. I mean it was not simple. It was very minimalist-oriented and I could see why Dick liked his work, but it was very different from Dick's and he had been Chihuly's student not too many--like a year or two before that. He had been at RISD.

JB: Therman had?

SE: Therman had been at Rhode Island School of Design studying under Chihuly.

JB: So there was some kind of tangential, at least, connection between all of them.

SE: Yes, but Chihuly was not happy with me for choosing Therman. He wanted me to choose Italo Scanga, whose work I also really loved but he was not primarily a glass artist. He just started to use blown pieces in his work--as vessels in his work--and it was really mixed media and glass was not the focus.

JB: He was a little older too, wasn't he?

SE: He's Chihuly's best friend. I don't know how much older he was. He might have been a little older than Chihuly. And he was teaching in San Diego at UCSD, I think, or San Diego State, I can't remember which. And he was a lovely guy and his work was really strong and I would have loved to have shown his work but not in that show. And Edith would never let me show it--I wanted to do a solo show. I'd seen his work at the Oakland Museum and I really, really loved it,

but anyway Dale didn't like that, that I wouldn't show him [in the Four Leaders show] and that I was showing his student who wasn't really "there" yet. And then we got this letter--Edith got this letter from--who's the guy that-- he's . . . a glass pioneer that taught up . . . [at U.C. Berkeley]? Marvin Lipofsky. . . .

JB: He's considered one of the [glass pioneers] --like Harvey Littleton [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

SE: [Harvey Littleton had built the first studio hot glass facility that was not in a commercial setting at the University of Wisconsin. Lipofsky was one of his first students.] He's one of the earliest ones working in it, for sure, and he didn't have many, I mean he didn't want to follow any kind of traditional forms like what Marquis was all about, taking traditional techniques and making them his own. And Chihuly, to some extent, was that way too--and kind of--Chihuly was like letting them be less rigid **[1:40:00]**, kind of more like an Abstract Expressionist kind of impulse.

But anyway, Lipofsky wrote a letter saying, "Why are you using Dick Weiss, his work is horrible. Therman told me it's because Sharon Emanuelli is dating his brother." So there was this horrible--so I wrote back and I said, "You know, it's none of your business anyway." But he didn't understand why he wasn't included, is really what it boiled down to. And the show didn't have that kind of purview really. It was just four different people, different kinds of glass and . . . .

And then he wrote back a really nasty note to me saying, "I wasn't talking to you," basically. [I did explain to Therman that it was Bernard and the committee (PIC) who decided on Dick and Dale and that Dick had suggested Therman.]

JB: Oh gosh. What did Edith think of all that? She just let you do it, I guess.

SE: Yeah, she didn't care. She didn't like him anyway, I think, that much.

JB: Lipofsky?

SE: Yeah, she didn't find him a congenial type, so she didn't care. Anyway, it didn't matter, but then there was this argument she and I had about the title, Four Leaders in Glass, which she made up, and I was against using because, first of all, I wasn't ready to deem these guys *the* leaders.

JB: And it sounded to me, and I think that was the impression that one got in looking at the show, that these were relatively, relative newcomers, or I guess you--

SE: Well, none of them--

JB: They weren't newcomers, but they were people who the vast majority of museum-goers had not heard their names before.

SE: If you were in the glass field you knew--

JB: You knew Chihuly.

SE: --everybody but Therman. If you were in the glass world. Because they were already having Glass Art Society conferences all over the place. There was one in LA before then. They were known, they were covered, but Therman was like--he was just out of school. Barely, I mean, just like a year or two out of school, not very long. I mean I'd have to look it up to be sure that's accurate, but he was so, you know, Chihuly just was flabbergasted that I would choose him. [Statom received his B.A. from RISD in 1974 and his M.A. from Pratt School of Art and Design in 1978.] But I just wanted that different look. And anyway, she insisted on it, because it was a pun on leading, you know, leaded glass. That's how she saw it.

JB: I never heard that.

SE: It should have been called Four Lead-ers [pronounced "Led-ers"] in Glass, but it would be spelled the same way, and that didn't work for me either since none of--only one of them--was using lead.

JB: Dick Weiss was the only one.

SE: So I've never been happy with that, but anyway.

JB: But I think you would have had to have been an insider in glass to have even known at the time.

SE: That was the--to have known who they were is one thing--but to call them four *leaders* in glass implies that you're trying to pluck somehow the most important glass artists in the country or the world or something. You know, people who are really having a big influence. Well, you could make an argument for all of them except Therman, and even Therman not too [long after], I mean it wasn't too long after that, that Therman was making big waves.

JB: Yes, I was going to say don't you think that that show had something to do with his reputation?

SE: Oh yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I do. And he taught at UCLA then after that too. When [overlapping dialogue; inaudible]..

JB: --Marquis was still there.

SE: I think Dick left and then Therman took over for a year.

JB: There was always a problem with hot glass in that it cost a lot of money to run a hot glass studio.

SE: Not to mention the insurance. I would imagine. I'm guessing.

JB: So I remember thinking how wonderful it was that they had that at UCLA and then I think within two or three years it was gone.

SE: Yeah, it didn't last very long. And then they tried to get rid of the whole design department. They got rid of [most of it], and they only kept ceramics, and that was . . . [mainly] because Adrian Saxe had a reputation outside the craft field, I think.

JB: Now, we're going to wrap up in a few minutes.

SE: Sorry, I've been going on and on here.

JB: No, no. What I'd like to do next time is talk more about the exhibitions that you were involved with. **[1:45:00]** And just to wrap up here, I'm wondering if-- at what point did you really think--maybe you didn't--but I'm assuming, I guess, that at some point you saw museum work as a career. You began to--

SE: Well, I liked working in a museum. I loved interacting with the people, I loved interacting with artists, and I was good at it because I actually understood how they made things and since it was a technique-oriented bunch of work we were dealing with, I actually could explain it, I could understand motivations. I also had--because I was doing a graduate program in sculpture--I also understood the conceptual stuff that was going on around us--and so I had an interest in work that wasn't strictly functional and sometimes work that was really unusual and Edith didn't like. But I was always trying to push her into letting me do things beyond that. And I could write about art because that was another skill I'd developed, purposefully developed in other areas, and--

JB: And you had experience with installation design too.

SE: Well, some, yeah, some. I knew how to hang things and I helped my friends in graduate school and in college. We hung shows and stuff. But nothing like what I did there [at CAFAM]. But my mother painted our house, you know, I painted the house with my mom, I knew how to do that, I knew how to order paint and put it on and what kind of brushes to use and how to screw things on. My mother was always building things too. If we needed an extra table for company she went out and bought a door and some legs and we put them together. I just--when Sandro [Shan's son] was a baby-- he thought [that] if he wanted something, he would just tell me to make it and he would have it. So if he needed binoculars, I would put some toilet paper rolls together, and that just kind of came naturally, and he just thought I could make everything. So I guess that's how I operate.

JB: [That's how] you saw yourself.

SE: Yeah. So anyway, we moved to New York [in 1984] and by then I was fully involved in the puzzle show that was going to travel internationally and I got this job ultimately with the Hudson River Museum for about a year and a half, almost two years--and before that I did a six- month project with the American Craft Museum. We were only in New York for three and a half years. And at some point Bob Bassler was my graduate advisor at Cal State Northridge and he is married to Lynn Bassler, whose name when I was growing up was Linda Allen. . . . [My mother was Linda Allen's kindergarten teacher] and Linda Allen's mother, Grace Allen, was my piano teacher and also my middle school music teacher.

JB: How funny.

SE: And both our fathers were farmers. So--and Bob's college roommate and graduate school roommate, George Baker, was my Occidental sculpture teacher. So that's how I got to Northridge because Bob was working--

JB: I was wondering [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

SE: I was working in plastics and Bob worked in plastics, so that's how I got—[George] pushed me over there. Anyway, so Bob and Lynn came to New York and visited and we went to the Noguchi Museum, which was brand new then in Long Island, and I burst into tears. I was looking at work that I felt so close to. . . . It was the kind of work that I really related to. And Bob also, his work, his early work--not the work he was doing when I was studying with him--but his earlier work, was . . . [somewhat] in the Noguchi mode in a lot of ways and here I was with my graduate advisor in this beautiful new museum with sculpture [I loved] and I realized I wasn't going to make any more.

JB: Oh, that's why you cried. Oh my.

SE: Yeah.

JB: Well, I think that's a good place to end. But what you did instead turned out to be--

SE: I was probably much better at writing about and presenting art and empathizing with the artists than I was at making it and figuring out what to do next. Although I did have some shows early on but--

JB: I want to talk about all of that. I think we're going to have plenty to talk about next time. **[1:50:00]** But until then, thank you very much.

SE: You're welcome. Thank you.

[End of Session 1: 1:50:05]

CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW OF SHARON K. EMANUELLI

Session 2: Monday, March 30, 2009. Interviewed by Joan M. Benedetti (2 hours, 43 minutes, 44 seconds).

JB: This is Monday, March 30, 2009, and I'm again in Los Angeles, at the home of Shan Emanuelli. Last week we talked about Shan's family and school background, and then her experience as an intern at LACMA, and how she came to work at CAFAM, first for Patrick Ela, and then for Edith Wyle. And my name is Joan Benedetti. Now Shan, before we get again into specifics and details--you were associated with so many different aspects of the museum. But before that, I'd just like to ask you a more general, wide-ranging question. It has to do with folk art. You, of course, have always been associated--except for the Festival of Masks--you were associated with contemporary craft.

SE: Yes.

JB: And--of course, besides the Festival of Masks--you also, when you were Senior Curator, were involved in the administration--at least--of folk art shows.

SE: Yeah. [I coordinated all of them.] And designed [a few installations], or helped hang [many of] them.

JB: Well, my question really has to do with what for some people was really controversial, and that was the interest [of CAFAM] in both folk art and contemporary craft. And I think most of us tried to reconcile those two things, and then Patrick later on added design, and at first that seemed to even complicate things more, but I'd just like to find out what your take was on it, both at the beginning, and then maybe later, as you worked with both.

SE: You mean how I felt about mixing them, or?

JB: Well, just how you felt like it worked. How did it function for the museum to have those--?

SE: All of those things.

JB: Yeah.

SE: Well, I think they [have similar] components with different emphases. [It is impossible to absolutely define these terms to establish lines that are not regularly crossed by individual examples.] I think there are areas in which folk art moves into contemporary craft. I mean one real classic example would be Japanese ceramics. Even with the National Treasures, [the Japanese artists thus designated], were doing things that might be innovative within their tradition, and then people would go and--younger people would go and study with them--and take the same technique, and move it into more of an individual statement . . . . It would move from, often,

the spiritual element of traditional art--or folk art, or village art, or however you want to look at it--would move into the personal expressions and reflections of the contemporary society, and contemporary craft. Design, of course, is an element of both of those things, and one thing about design that I find really interesting actually--and troubling sometimes--is that design for production (although that's not always what design is in the [broad] sense), but design for production, or architecture in particular, often seems by "fine art" museums, to carry precedence over craftsmanship. However, it's because, I think, it's seen as an intellectual pursuit, rather than a physical one.

JB: Architecture or design is, yeah.

SE: Yes. You know, pure design. It's--you don't get your hands dirty. . . . But it always struck me as odd, because there's nothing dirtier than oil paint, or sculpture, with equipment and pouring--pouring metals or any of those things. Even collage makes a big mess, and I never quite [laughter] have understood why there tends to be a heavier emphasis in those museums, if they do it at all, on design rather than any kind of craftsmanship. And if it's [craft media] seen as being too hands-on, or too crafted, why that's a drawback? I can see that, actually--there are times when it's too fussy, and there's no **[05:00]** concept, [laughter] it seems to me, other than decoration. But design often is about decoration too. And of course--

JB: And even fine art, in recent years has some [decorative aspects].

SE: Well they—there is commentary on decoration, of course. ["Fine art" and art broadly speaking, has always had decorative aspects and even decorative purpose. Recently some fine artists have chosen to highlight decoration.] And anyway, there are a lot of people working in craft media that have [many] narrative and conceptual bases as well, and some that are totally abstracted, and surface design, and so on and so forth--just like painters--don't really often have a narrative in their paintings. But still refer to--you know--the broader scope of their medium . . . .

Did I mind having all those things together? No, I really liked it, and I tried really hard to push into the conceptual realm, and there are many artists who are interested in folk art.

JB: Yes. And have been influenced [by it]. When you mentioned Japanese, or--in particular, there's . . . certainly with ceramics, but with woodworking [also], and the whole aesthetic of Japanese art, much of which we think of as folk art--has certainly had a great influence on craftsmanship. On craft artists, I guess I should say. But I know that--I heard this over and over again--there were people who--often folk art collectors--who really couldn't be interested less in the contemporary craft shows, or the design shows. On the other hand, I thought it was interesting that those that collected contemporary craft often were very interested in folk art as well. There seemed to be a broader interest [on the part of collectors of contemporary things],

and I do think that [was] Edith Wyle's [view], although her special interest was folk art--I think you would agree.

SE: Yes.

JB: She certainly collected some contemporary craft and her houses always reflected a--what I would call--a modernist aesthetic, which was very inclusive.

SE: Yes. And she was a painter.

JB: Yes. I just--I guess you've answered my question: It didn't--folk art didn't give you any trouble.

SE: No, I loved learning about it, in fact, and I spent, you know, two weeks in Japan when the puzzle show traveled there, and I spent all my time there going to visit [folk art places--traditional craftspeople, antique shops, and flea markets, where traditional objects could be found]--well not all. I did try to find some contemporary art galleries, which was not easy, because they weren't--you know, there weren't listings of them anywhere.

JB: At that time, yeah.

SE: Yeah, at that time. [Folk art has often been considered to represent a community aesthetic, and the maker is "anonymous," so the community aesthetic is analyzed and noted. However, the maker was known to the community, was not anonymous to them, and had his or her own level of skill, aesthetic sense, and, possibly, personal creativity within the traditional community forms.]

But I did spend a lot of time going to the studios of, you know, weavers and dyers, and people like that when I could. And I went to visit, you know, traditional architecture, and--I went to the Mingei Museum and that sort of thing. . . . My background at home, growing up, is that . . . I had grandmothers and great-grandmothers, who were quilters on one side, and on the other side, a knitter, who did tiny knitting that you would almost think was weaving. But [she made] bedspreads.

JB: Yeah, yeah.

SE: And beautiful--both--you know, one great-grandmother in particular was a fabulous quilter, and the other great grandmother was an incredible knitter, and . . . my mother sewed, and I loved textiles. I mean we would buy--we would go to the fabric store, and just buy fabrics, and figure out what to do with them later. And when my mother passed away, she had boxes and boxes full. And she probably had winnowed that down several times as she felt herself nearing the end, you know? [laughter]

JB: Yes, yes. Well, it sounds as if you [already] had an appreciation for folk art. Did you find that as you worked with it, though, at the museum, and were exposed to more different kinds, did your appreciation for it, and your interest in it grow?

SE: Yes, of course. I'm just a naturally curious **[10:00]** person . . . . I take a lot of joy in just the discovery of things--so in that sense, it was never problematic to me, and I don't even remember hearing those comments too much. [laughter]

JB: Well it's maybe just as well that you didn't.

SE: The design [shows we did] I always saw as interesting too. One of the first design shows that we did was [about] Shinjuku Station [Shinjuku: The Phenomenal City; opened June 17, 1977].

JB: Yes, I was wondering about that.

SE: --which was really folk--you know kind of a folk-ad-hoc kind of design, not real design in the way we think of it, but it was environmental design that grew organically.

JB: Yes, and it was really a--the exhibition was really a contemporary [popular art] take on all of that.

SE: Yes, yes.

JB: Would you talk just a little bit about the aspect of function as it applies, I guess . . . to all of those things?

SE: Well my sense of--the way I structure my thinking about craft [design and folk art] has to do with material [and process]; relationship to function; and then relationship to environment. And with function, there's a continuum . . . even in folk art, not everything is totally functional. It rarely is, actually, in folk art. It seems like there's always a sensibility, there's always a response to the material, there's often a lot of decoration, you know, textiles especially. Or tile work.

JB: Let me just interject--use the word "function" in a broad sense to mean not only the specific utilitarian function of an object, but also perhaps its function in the culture from which it comes.

SE: Well, obviously, in a traditional culture, the functions can be very utilitarian. They also can be spiritual, they can be community-oriented, you know, building a community, communicating within a community. [Context is important to consider. When an object is removed from its original context to be exhibited in a more neutral space, we tend to privilege its visual impact.]

JB: And those kinds of things apply to what we call fine art also.

SE: Absolutely.

JB: But we, for some reason, we think of them more--

SE: Well, you know, I once was asked to write an essay for an art law encyclopedia, a resource for lawyers, art professionals, and institutions.

JB: My goodness.

SE: On the evolution of the term "fine art." And it didn't actually get done, but I did do the research.

JB: But you--and you thought about it, of course.

SE: Yeah, I thought about it a lot. And I went back to where the term "art" came up, and originally it meant craft. ["Artists" were understood, on some broad level, as tradespeople with specialized skills.] . . . And it wasn't so very long ago, I mean it was in the Renaissance era. And it was after the Renaissance era that [the concept of] "fine art" evolved. . . . And it evolved more into the 19th century really, where it sort of settled as a difference between the two, [i.e., "craft" or "craftsmanship" and "fine art"]. [The concept of "art" and the meanings of the word have evolved over the centuries, as did the understanding of art-making as more than a skill.]

JB: Although there certainly have been movements, the Arts and Crafts movement, and then the Bauhaus that tried . . . to make it all more organic. . . .

So--I'd just like to talk . . . about Edith's thinking about these things. And I know that she did make several attempts to not just think about the relationships, but to--and she wrote some statements. But in another way, in her day-to-day work and life, she really was quite intuitive about the importance of these two things.

SE: Yeah. I think for her, the most important thing was the aesthetic component. She liked the personal aspects of involvement with artists. And she liked the--she was attracted to . . . most of all, to the aesthetic. And [art] wasn't of interest to her necessarily unless there was an aesthetic [or expressive] component that *she* felt was strong, [that she understood]. Except with things like toys, or something like that, which she also loved. [She speaks about this at length in the interview I did of her in 1993 for the Archives of American Art.]

JB: Oh yes.

SE: She--you know--she had a childhood that was somewhat isolated because of the polio epidemic at the time.

JB: And she was an only child.

SE: And she was an only child, and her parents were musicians, and she had kind of a--you know--an interesting, but kind of solitary upbringing. And she was isolated from her close friends, and at a certain point, because they all had to be kind of--you had to be careful not to get polio. And so she had a huge imagination, and she played with puppets and dolls, and had stories in her mind, and you know, she was very creative as a kid. And she was a dancer, and you know, she had a very physical component about her that wasn't--she wasn't logic-oriented, or intellectually-complicated, particularly. [But she did respond emotionally.]

JB: Yeah, that's what I was thinking.

SE: She was very visceral in her response to things. And she sized people up like, you know, just immediately, about whether she'd be interested in what they had to show or not. And she went

with people who didn't have all the credentials that maybe you'd need to show at the L.A. County Museum, right?

JB: Right.

SE: These were often people who had just been interested in cultures and cultural objects, and spent time there, immersed in the culture, . . . not necessarily PhDs . . . or, you know, [having] strong publishing in a certain area, or any of those things. And when Edith wrote a catalog, it was mostly pictures. She didn't want too much commentary.

JB: Yes, it seemed to work out that way, anyway.

SE: Well I'm pretty sure that's true. [laughter] I had that argument with her on occasion, because--especially with the contemporary side—[which], you know, I was very interested in--right [at that time] with performance art, and the Women's Building, and all those things [going on] that were really pretty avant-garde, and, you know, she was not interested in that stuff at all. . . . [laughter]

JB: Yeah, I--

SE: We had those discussions about the value of that kind of work . . . [such as] Minimalism, conceptual art.

JB: It was interesting that she was on the board of Cal Arts, which was the citadel of conceptual art.

SE: Oh yeah.

JB: At least after it, you know, moved up to Valencia. She didn't stay on their board, but she certainly was exposed to a lot of what went on there.

SE: Well she liked the music component.

JB: Yes, and the theater component.

SE: And the design. You know she—Milton Zolotow was an important--he was--he ended up teaching there, and he was an important kind of formulator of the museum, too.

JB: Absolutely, he designed the logo for the Egg and the Eye, and--

SE: And [for] the first Mask Festival parade. I'm sorry you don't have that poster. **[20:00]**

JB: Oh, we do actually. I think since I talked to you last, we discovered a few things in the archives [at UCLA], and we do have that.

SE: Oh good.

JB: Well, there's so much [about CAFAM] to talk about, I think maybe we ought to just jump in. [overlapping dialogue; inaudible]

SE: There's another thing about--just a small comment about function--

JB: Oh sure, go ahead.

SE: --that the elements of an object, whether it's color, form, decoration, type of application of dyes, or all of those--or glazes, or whatever it is, how you--

JB: The technical stuff.

SE: --how the technique is applied, and all of that--that's all functional too. And it's the same in paint, it's the same in sculpture of any kind. Also, it's worth noting that sculpture sort of took a second place in the 19th and 20th centuries to painting.

JB: Yes.

SE: And it's only been in the--since the '60s, when I was kind of coming of age myself in the arts, when Minimalism-- that started in the '50s, but it really . . . became prominent in the '60s. That was another thing, when I was doing my graduate work, of course, I was oriented in that way to minimal kinds of form, geometric forms, and that was something Edith didn't understand either. So, that was like absence of decoration in a way. [laughter]

JB: And yet she--I think she appreciated people like Noguchi, or--I don't know.

SE: Oh yeah, but he was not a Minimalist in that sense.

JB: Well, not strictly speaking, but--

SE: And he had an anthropomorphic interest.

JB: Yeah that's true, yes. And he also had come from a tradition, the Japanese tradition.

SE: Well she liked that kind of thing, you know, the relationship to your past, and where you came from, and the artist--you know, she was always interested in that.

JB: So let's just go back now, a little bit, to what we were talking about last time. I wanted to just get into a little bit more your experience, when you first started at CAFAM. We talked a lot about the Festival, and I don't want to talk much more about that today, but I was wondering about your--you know the other things that you did when you were working for Patrick.

SE: I was doing membership, sending out invitations, you know mailings.

JB: Was that partly--now, a related question is--do you know when there was first a publicist on the staff--

SE: Well, that was Nina Green, as far as I know, [she] was the first one, but I don't--

JB: That's what I was trying to remember.

SE: --know if there was anybody else before that.

JB: OK, so Nina was there when you first started.

SE: Or soon after. I don't really remember when she showed up.

JB: OK, so you didn't have to worry about that.

SE: No, I never did any publicity writing or anything. I often might--I worked with a publicist when I was involved with exhibitions, but I didn't ever [have to think about publicity at CAFAM]. I don't even think with the Mask Festival--I think Nina must have been there by the time I was working on the Mask Festival.

JB: Yeah, I think so too. I think there was one other person there, maybe Gail Goldberg, did a little bit, or someone like that.

SE: She might have, I don't--she was more exhibitions-oriented, I thought.

JB: Was she? Well--

SE: Maybe even membership--I don't know what she did. She volunteered mostly, didn't she?

JB: I think so, and she did work with volunteers too, she did a number [of different things].

SE: Yeah, oh, she was volunteer coordinator, that's what she was. . . . That's what she got paid for.

JB: So at any rate, Patrick worked on the parade in 1976, and then he asked you to coordinate a full blown festival in '77.

SE: I didn't work on the previous one though.

JB: No, no.

SE: At all. I had nothing to do with it, never saw it or anything.

JB: So, and he started--had only started working there in October of '75. Just a year before the parade--the first parade. So, when you began working for him, he had been with **[25:00]** CAFAM for less than two years. And I guess I was just wondering what it was like to work for him at the beginning.

SE: Oh it was fun. I mean, you know, I lived in Santa Monica, and he'd pick me up in the morning on the way to work, you know?

JB: He lived in Santa Monica too at that time.

SE: Right, and he'd have me over for dinner once in a while, and when I turned 30 he gave me a birthday party, and—[laughter]

JB: Well you had known each other for a while at Occidental College.

SE: Yeah we had known each other. I mean we weren't super close, but we knew each other really well in the art department that year, and Bob Roman was his friend, and Sally [Patrick's first wife] --we were all in the art department. And saw each other a lot, and, you know, he was kind, he

was friendly, and supportive, and it--you know, it was great. And I was always willing to do whatever was needed, and he just had me do that. [laughter]

JB: Do you--I've been wondering if, when you were first hired by him, was there any thought that he was going to be involved more with the Festival, or was it--was the idea [from the beginning] that you were going to basically take it over?

SE: Well, my recollection is that I was just going to take it over, and use him as a resource, and Edith as a resource, and you know there was some minimal structure there, and I don't know, I never really thought of it as being directed particularly, except for what Edith had wanted done, you know? But I didn't really think of it-- I think he kind of worked for her in that regard, when he was doing the Festival. It wasn't--it was her vision. It wasn't Patrick's vision particularly. [To be clear, there was no discussion with me about coordinating the Festival until I'd been volunteering for about six months.]

JB: Yes, and it needed to be done, and he was--

SE: Yeah she could--she wasn't organized enough to do it, or interested in the detail work, so, you know, it was one of us (laughter) who was there to do it.

JB: And there had been someone else who was actually organizing the parade itself, wasn't there?

SE: Yeah, the Loomises. Bill Loomis and his wife were [professional] parade organizers, basically, and they did it all over the place, you know? And they came and organized the parade. And she [Edith] was never happy with them, because they weren't really--they didn't really "get" folk art. Or masking. You know-- they were really interested in cowboys and Indians, and they probably did a lot of rodeo parades and things like that.

JB: Oh. Well I'm just thinking about Patrick, and I wanted to talk about him a little bit, and your experience with him. He was hired as Administrative Director to Edith's Program Director.

SE: Right.

JB: And in some sense, they were supposed to be co-directors, although of course she had been the founder of the museum--

SE: Actually, I think he was hired as Assistant Director, wasn't he?

JB: No, it--he was--some people referred to him that way, but he--in the board meeting minutes at which he was appointed--

SE: Hired, it was Administrator?

JB: Yes, yes it was.

SE: And she wasn't Director then, she was changed to Program Director at that point?

JB: That—well, yes, it was just about that point that the transition was made. But of course, she was the founder, and--

SE: Visionary, really.

JB: Yes, yes.

SE: He was there to do the things she couldn't do.

JB: Yes.

SE: Really, I mean that's--you know, to keep everything organized and running, to raise money, and--

JB: Yes, and to handle budgets. I remember her saying one time that she was the accelerator, and Patrick was the brake. That's the way it was supposed to work out. [laughter]

SE: I believe that.

JB: So, he--his primary responsibility was budgets, and then, along with a fellow named Mark Gallon, [who was lent from Tosco by Mort Winston], fund-raising and grant writing--and personnel as well. And I'm just wondering, you know, if you could talk a little bit about what his strengths, and perhaps some of his less-strong points were.

SE: At that point in time?

JB: At that point in time--of course it evolved, and your relationship to him evolved.

SE: Yeah. I wasn't aware of any drawbacks to Patrick at that time at all. I mean I enjoyed working with him, I found him fun to be around. He was real supportive of me, really supportive of me. **[30:00]** You know, he was having a good time too.

JB: And you were so busy, you probably didn't have time--

SE: Yeah, I was busy.

JB: --to really think about anything other than what you were--

SE: I wasn't critical of anybody particularly--except I'd get--I'd try to fill in with Edith sometimes, where I thought she wasn't covering the bases or something--you know, conceptually or scholarly. That sort of thing.

JB: But that was a little later, when you got more involved in--

SE: Yeah even then, I think as soon as I started doing exhibitions, I designed--helping even install them, I think I started to push on her a little bit, not intentionally pushing, but you know kind of challenging, or bringing up stuff, or you know whatever. I was in, you know, graduate school at that point.

JB: Yes, yes.

SE: You know, and I was--concept was what it was all about, you know? And I was constantly discussing that with my colleagues at school. And working hard, and getting dirty in the--you know, I mean spending a lot of time at Cal State Northridge, in the [sculpture] shop. [laughter]

JB: It just occurred to me, of course that was your focus in school. I wonder if you were exposed at any point to folklorists, or--

SE: At school?

JB: At--well at school, or maybe in this first year that you were at CAFAM?

[Dog barking in background.]

SE: Excuse me.

[Break in recording.]

JB: OK, we're back.

SE: OK, **[to dog]** go away. Go on, go away.

JB: So, at the--while you were still working for Patrick, you at some point began to work on installations, or on some aspect of exhibitions.

SE: Yeah.

JB: I guess I'd like you to talk about that. You mentioned--before we started today--that you were aware of some of the [CAFAM] exhibitions even before you started to work.

SE: Yeah. [Shan and Joan start looking at the chronological list of CAFAM exhibitions.]

JB: I think we--let's see, what did we decide? Was it Devils, Demons, and Dragons [opened October 31, 1976], I think, you said was [up when you started]?

SE: That was up when I started.

JB: That was about when you started?

SE: Yeah, towards the end of it. At the end of it, probably [it closed on January 2, 1977] . . . . And I met Lee Mullican. I remember that--while that was going on.

JB: Yes, and he--

SE: So, I must have been there in December.

JB: Yes, because I'm sure he was working already on the LA Collects Folk Art [opened April 12, 1977] show, which he--I guess you would say he curated that show. He certainly organized it.

SE: Yeah, he did.

JB: The first show that was mounted in January, right after Devils, Demons, and Dragons was California Women in Crafts [opened January 18, 1977]. And that was curated by Bernard Kester and Rita Lawrence.

SE: Right, that's when I met them.

JB: Did you work on that at all?

SE: I don't remember if I did.

JB: You probably had just started a week or two before--

SE: Yeah I probably helped, you know. I probably painted or something.

JB: Yeah.

SE: I don't really remember the beginning of it. I remember Rita in that exhibition a lot, and I remember Bernard, of course. I can't really--you know, I can't say that I understood much about what was going on in that exhibition. [Rita was a first cousin of Samuel Kaiser, who later became my father-in-law. But I didn't learn that until after I'd been dating Mike Kaiser.]

JB: Do you--I guess my question is, do you have a remembrance of the first show that you actually worked on?

SE: You mean as an assistant to Edith, or just helping out?

JB: Well, first just helping out, yeah.

SE: Probably LA Collects Folk Art [opened April 12, 1977] would be it. [That's] the one that I remember working on. And I don't remember that too well, or what I would have done there. [I probably just painted walls and pedestals.]

JB: That was a pretty big show.

SE: I don't even remember--yeah it was a big show, and I don't remember even what it looked like too much. **[35:00]**

JB: It had a wonderful catalog, the photographs were black and white, but they were very good photographs.

SE: Max must have been doing it by then.

JB: Maybe so.

SE: I don't know.

JB: But there were a lot of collectors, I don't remember how many, but there must have been at least, I don't know, 30 or 40 different collectors with several objects . . . from each collection.

SE: Yeah, that's right.

JB: But you were not involved with the organization of it, per se.

SE: I don't think so--no. I don't think I--I mean I was around it, you know. I was busy doing mailings and things, and doing membership, you know--not cataloging, but typing in the members and their addresses, and that sort of thing. [I was volunteering 20 hours per week.]

JB: And I suppose you must have started to think about the Festival, or at least be having discussions with Patrick about that, or was that--did that come up later?

SE: I don't remember the initial discussions of it. I just remember diving in. [laughter]

JB: I think you said that you started--you at least started to get paid for the Festival in July. But--so you don't remember really thinking about it much before then?

SE: No. I don't remember--I mean I probably heard about it. I don't think they asked me to do it much before I started doing it. I don't think so; I don't think they were prepping me yet. I think they were just getting used to me being around, and telling me to do things that I could do, and get them done. [laughter] You know, they were enjoying having another body.

JB: Yeah, of course.

SE: And you know it was all volunteer, and it was only--and it was half-time, and the other half of the time, I was working on my graduate [thesis], and I took a couple of weeks off to--three weeks maybe--to build my installation piece . . . for my thesis.

JB: Yes.

SE: And to write that.

JB: So, I guess--you have the "chron" list right there--why don't you just--we don't need to talk about each one, but if there are particular ones that you remember something about, you know, something notable, or that you actually worked on, go ahead and talk about that.

SE: Well, Patterns: Fabric Stencil Art of Japan [opened June 17, 1977] was really fun. I was really intrigued by that, I'd never seen anything like it before. Like that kind of thing before. And I remember--whoever the curator was [Taeko Fujikawa was the guest curator] --I don't remember that, but I remember being in the process of hanging it, and the interesting way Edith had them suspended away from the wall, and that's when I became really aware of Edith's talent for exhibition design--and her interest in elaborating on the objects. You know, adding [other objects] from the culture, or you know, the didactic part of it, which [for her] was totally visual, really. There was very little text, but Karen Copeland by then was writing text labels. [Wyle credits Copeland in the catalog introduction as "Registrar and Education Curator."] And anyway, that's what I remember about that: beginning to really appreciate her design. And then Shinjuku: [the Phenomenal City; opened August 7, 1977] was a big eye-opener. I didn't have much to do with it--some architect came in and did it.

JB: Yeah, there were a couple of guys . . . . [Peter Gluck, Head, Japan Study Center at Columbia University and Henry Smith, a Fellow in Japanese History at Cornell University,were co-curators and co-designers, with the assistance of architecture critic Koji Taki.]

SE: Yeah, they came in and did it, and set it up, and it was already--I think, prepared for somewhere else . . . . or it was prepared in their studio and brought in, it wasn't--because it was mostly graphics, almost entirely graphics and photographs, with a few artifacts, like plastic sushi.

American Crafts in the White House [opened August 17, 1977]. I think I--by then, I was starting to help--I think I may have been helping with that somehow. Writing to artists and asking for objects that we could keep.

JB: And that was again Bernard--Bernard Kester who worked on that, wasn't he? Wasn't that?

SE: No, I think that was--no, that was Ann Robbins and Susan Skinner.

JB: Oh, was it? OK.

SE: I have the catalog. Do you want me to pull it out real fast? To get the [overlapping dialogue; inaudible]

JB: OK, hold--I'll pause it.

SE: It's right here. **[40:00]**

JB: OK. **[Break in recording.]**

JB: Hi, we're back. We're talking about American Crafts in the White House, which--

SE: Well that was influenced, definitely, by Joan Mondale.

JB: Who had visited--had been an honored guest at the Festival Primavera, the fund-raiser.

SE: Yeah. Before that?

JB: I think so. It was around that time. [The Festival Primavera at which Joan Mondale was honored was held on April 16, 1977.]

SE: Yeah, either before or right after. [American Crafts in the White House; opened August 17, 1977.]

JB: Yeah.

SE: And she--and Elena Canavier was [involved]. Elena--she has another--she uses her maiden name now, which I can't think of.

JB: She was head of the Crafts Division of the NEA [1974 – 1978].

SE: Right. And she somehow inaugurated the project for the Senate Wives Luncheon. So, all of these [place setting and table decorations] were commissioned [from American craftspeople] for the Senate Wives Luncheon, which [was] given by the First Lady when they first came to

Washington, or after the election, soon after the election, and the inauguration. [Rosalynn Carter was the First Lady at the time.]

JB: I remember there was actually a part of the exhibition [that] included a table with the table--some of the table-settings that had been [at the White House].

SE: Yes. [They were the focus. Included was one example of each of 14 different ceramic place settings, with blown-glass wine and water glasses. There were also wrought-iron place card and napkin holders, a hand-made commemorative book, and a centerpiece: a basket made by a Native American, filled with wood-shaved and cornshuck flowers made by traditional Appalachian crafters. Additional work from each artisan was borrowed as well and shown in vitrines. There were 30 individual artists or collectives represented.]

JB: It could have been all of them, yeah. So you worked on that show [inaudible].

SE: I worked on it. What did I do exactly? I remember writing to the artists, asking if we could keep a place setting.

JB: Oh, that's right.

SE: I believe, and getting their [statements]. I did that part. There's a little statement from each . . . artist, there's a photo, and a statement about their work [in the catalog]. Some long, some very short. [laughter] And I think that's what I did, and that was probably my first catalog involvement . . . . Karen probably did the . . . object list in the back. Max King is listed as graphic designer and receptionist. [laughter] [That was the first CAFAM catalog King designed.]

JB: Oh, Max King--well I guess all of us did a lot of things, but--

SE: Yeah, yeah.

JB: Yeah, Max was a graphic designer, but she didn't actually get to--she was working at the museum, I think in the shop before [she got to do any graphic design].

SE: Yeah, I think she volunteered in the shop, and then she was given the job of receptionist when we needed that, and then she said, "You know, I'm a graphic designer," and took off from there. And pretty soon, she set up her own little studio in the house, in the cottage [around the corner on Curson].

JB: Yeah, I remember she--it was her idea, I think, to establish a format for the catalogs.

SE: Yes, that they would all be a similar size. Of course, that didn't last very long, but [laughter] more or less.

JB: Well, it lasted a while.

SE: Well, some of them got bigger and smaller, but I think she did try to make them consistent, yeah. Yeah, she did, she was a--she really elevated—really--what the museum did, publications-wise.

JB: Oh yes.

SE: Invitations, and everything.

JB: Yes.

SE: She was important [in CAFAM's history]. And she's still my friend, we still see each--we vacation together every summer with our kids, who are the same age.

JB: That's great. [laughter]

JB: So, I--you know, every time I go through this list of exhibitions, I'm amazed at how many shows were done in . . . each year. And I started to count up the shows that were mounted during the time that you were on staff: 21 shows were mounted *before* Four Leaders in Glass! In other words, that was the first show--we talked about that last time--that you curated. But you had had experience by that time with 21 different shows at the museum! And I suppose you were working on some things elsewhere as well, including your own show. But--

SE: Let me see when that was exactly, because I haven't--I'm trying to place myself.

JB: Yeah. Should I pause?

SE: If you can. **[Break in recording.]**

JB: OK, I'm going to start again.

SE: OK, I was just looking to see when my thesis was. Published, in June '78, so the [thesis] exhibition would have been a few--a month or two earlier. . . . And--so by then, I was done with school, and I think right about that time was when I--in June was when I **[45:00]** started really being involved more in exhibitions--with American Crafts in the White House. [It was] probably June, July, I started working on that; we didn't do anything too far in advance.

JB: That was in '77.

SE: Oh.

JB: Yeah, American Crafts in the White House opened August '77.

SE: Oh, so never mind, but it still seems like that was when--June of '77-- I'm sorry--I'm getting the years mixed up. I forgot I was in graduate school that long.

JB: Yeah, well, it was probably a two-year program.

SE: I was in [graduate school] for three years, but I didn't realize . . . [during] more than a year--a year and a half--of it, [I] was at the museum.

JB: Yeah, you were a very busy girl. [laughter] So were there any of these others here on the first page that you particularly remember?

SE: Well, the Artists' Mask Invitational [opened October 4, 1977], that really was--that was Edith's idea, but it was my show. (laughter) In the sense that I invited artists that I knew of. We had a list from--what was her name? Betty Asher--who was the assistant to the curator, the contemporary art curator, Maurice Tuchman, at the LA County Museum. [She was also a collector and mother of the artist, Michael Asher.] And she gave us a list of artists that she thought would probably participate, so--and their addresses and phone numbers--and all of that, and I added a few in. And some craftspeople we added in--although Betty actually collected ceramic cups. [laughter] So she was aware of that community as well. **[phone rings]** Excuse me, I'd better answer that. **[Break in recording.]**

JB: Talking about the Artists Mask Invitational.

SE: Yeah, now that was a silent auction really, of objects that we commissioned--you know, we asked artists to make a mask, an object, some kind of artwork relating to masking. And some of it was just an abstract painting—one was a squared-off painting with eyes, nose, and mouth on it. And some of it was more of an object.

JB: Now I've seen the--I guess it was an auction checklist; we have a copy of that in the CAFAM archive. But . . . there must have been a display of some kind.

SE: Yes, oh yeah, it was all over upstairs.

JB: On the third floor.

SE: Yeah. I don't remember that it was in the downstairs, was there something [downstairs] at the same time? Ten-four--yeah, the Natzler show was downstairs [Natzler: Ceramics of Gertrud and Otto Natzler, 1971-77; opened October 4, 1977].

JB: Yes.

SE: So there are no slides of that?

JB: Of the Mask Invitational?

SE: Or of Otto and Gertrude Natzler?

JB: I--no, I guess not. That's what it says. There was a catalog, but that was before I--you know--made sure that we had slides of--

SE: Everything.

JB: --everything.

SE: Yeah.

JB: And the Artists Mask Invitational, there were little thumbnail photographs, black and white photographs, of each mask on this checklist, but that's the only documentation we have of that.

SE: Interesting.

JB: So they were for people to see, obviously, before the auction, though, for a day or two--

SE: Oh no, they were up for longer than that.

JB: Oh were they?

SE: Yeah, they were up for, I think, as long as the Natzler show was up.

JB: Oh, OK.

SE: They were up as an exhibition.

JB: And then the--

SE: And then we had like a two-day silent auction kind of thing, or maybe you could sign up all along, I can't remember how it functioned, but--

JB: But the auction was at the end.

SE: Yeah, at the end. And we didn't sell a huge [number] of things, I don't remember that either, that we sold very much.

JB: But it was intended as a fund-raiser, I suppose.

SE: That's correct, yeah, around the time of the Mask Festival, obviously. Now the--Gertrude and Otto Natzler, that's not the one where his solo work was shown, is it?

JB: It was after Gertrude had died, and in fact I think he had remarried at that point, and--

SE: Oh OK, so that was that one. Yeah, I remember that one really well, and Edith kept saying it's a good thing he stopped working. [laughter] She didn't like what he was doing on his own.

JB: Well I guess it was Gertrude's glazes--

SE: No, Gertrude threw the . . . pots, and he did the glazing.

JB: Oh, it was the opposite, OK.

SE: So that his pots, when he started [working alone after his marriage to Gail], were all hand-built, and very squared off, and kind of-- the proportions were not as elegant, you know, he wasn't doing the kind of vessels she did, thrown on a wheel, the thin, thin, thin **[50:00]** porcelain with . . . his glazes elaborating that. [The pieces he made for the CAFAM show were] his glazes on these kind of heavy surfaces, you know heavy, chunky objects. I didn't dislike them, because the glazing was always interesting. But . . . [Edith] found [them] not up to snuff, so she--and she found him very morose, and I think he did have a depression issue, but she didn't like it. [laughter] She did it because I think she felt he wanted--it was wanting to be done, and his [new] wife had been photographing, and she had these beautiful photographs of all the ceramics that both he did,

and also the ones they [he and Gertrude] did together, and she was helping him [to] kind of . . . cap off his career. And Couturier Gallery was selling his work at that point, I think too. Or soon after, so I've seen his own work, his solo work [and the work they did together] in there.

JB: I think that the catalog for that show was the first [CAFAM catalog with] . . . color photographs.

SE: So Max was really getting influential. [laughter]

JB: Yes, it was the first one that she had done that was really you know, quite elaborate, and really showed off her talent.

SE: From Flat to Form: Ben Gurule and Carlo Cattaneo [opened November 15, 1977] came next. UCLA Professor Nathan Shapira was the curator. He also designed the catalog and installation, apparently with Max's help. The artists both created, cut, and folded paper constructions. Gurule was an American designer and inventor. His work is based on complex geometries and engineering concepts. Cattaneo was a graphic designer from Milan. His playful sculptures were inspired by origami and 20th century Constructivists. [Cattaneo] wanted--he had this idea that Baja, California, was very mysterious, and exotic, because some colleague of his at the university had disappeared into Baja California, and they would get these cryptic letters [from him] . . . . So, we went down to Ensenada; I took him--with my sister--down to Ensenada around Christmas time, I think. And he came to our house--my parents' house--in Brawley, which was near the Mexican border, and then we drove down to Ensenada and stayed a few days, and came back. What I do remember is that he got pick-pocketed and lost his wallet. [laughter]

JB: Well, did any of that--was any of that [interest in the mysterious] reflected in the work that he did?

SE: No. No, no. I'm just bringing it up because it was something I did. You know, I took this guy from Italy, who I'd had an interest in because I--my family's from Northern Italy . . . on my father's side.

JB: Oh right, of course.

SE: And we went down to--spend some time in Baja, and came back. [laughter]

JB: One of the perks of the job.

SE: Well I ended up paying, I think, my own way, but--

JB: So, at this point you were still--were you still working for Patrick, or were you--

SE: No, I was--by then I think I was paid full- time. [My title was Administrative Assistant and Festival of Masks Coordinator.]

JB: Yeah, '79 is what I found on your resumé as being the time that you--that you officially or formally--

SE: Were hired?

JB: --started working for--as Edith's assistant, but obviously, you were involved a bit before that in some of these--

SE: [I was paid half-time until early 1978, when I was paid full-time and was helping Edith Wyle with exhibitions or whatever else was needed. Maybe the time--the half-time that I was paid, after the first Festival was over. Then I was paid full-time for working with Edith probably, but that would have been '78. But I know that I was paid for the Festival the first year.]

JB: Yeah, yeah. I would think so.

SE: OK--so J.B. Blunk: Sculptures, 1952-1977 [opened January 9, 1978]--I remember working with him, that was really fun. But I didn't have anything to do with it, Edith handled most of that stuff. You know, at that point, maybe I was starting to do--she had a secretary—Merat [Kabede] was there--but I may have started to do some of the technical, you know, record-keeping and stuff like that. You know, just the sort of administrative stuff **[55:00]** that Patrick wasn't involved in. I remember working with Joyce [Winkel] on . . . Romanian Textiles [March 7, 1978]. I don't remember Art and Romance of Peasant Clothes [opened March 6, 1978].

JB: That was a show that was brought in. There was a Folkwear company--something like that. Remember--they had patterns?

SE: Oh yeah, yeah with patterns. They made patterns, and I bought some of those, and I made a kimono.

JB: Yes.

SE: I made a jacket for my mom, and--yeah, I made Mike a bathrobe for Christmas, but I wasn't married to him yet.

JB: That was sort of still the height of interest in, you know, what we used to call "ethnic clothing."

SE: Yeah. The Dyer's Art: Ikat, Batik, Plangi [opened April 25, 1978]. . . .

JB: Now that was Jack Lenor Larson I believe that put [it together]--or well, at least he was the titular head. There was someone else who actually did the work [on the exhibition], I think, but--

SE: Yeah, I don't remember much about [working on it]. I remember Artesanos Mexicanos [opened June 27, 1978] with Judith Bronowski [as the curator].

JB: Yes, that was an enormous show.

SE: I had gotten very involved with that, helping get it produced, and--

JB: Yeah, tell about that, because that was such an elaborate show. I think it took up both galleries.

SE: It did, and we had the three artists who were—she [Judith] had gone [to Mexico] and made films of the three folk artists [Pedro Linares, Sabina Sanchez, and Manuel Jiménez]. And she had

collected work from them, and brought it to the States, and helped to sell their work. And she got this exhibition--got Edith to agree to this exhibition--and we somehow ended up with objects in the collection. I don't know if they were purchased by the museum, or if she gave them, or how we got them exactly. But the--we had their work in the exhibition, and we showed her three films on a continuous loop. [The three films were produced by Bronowski and Robert Grant.]

JB: Right.

SE: And the artists themselves came [from Mexico], and they did demonstrations in the galleries for--

JB: I think we must have had quite a bit of grant money, I think maybe--

SE: Yeah I think we had a lot of grant money . . . for that. [The exhibition was completely funded—and the objects paid for—by Piñata Foods; "supplemental outreach activities" were funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.] And probably [TOSCO] some, and I don't know who else, but anyway, the three folk artists--one was an embroiderer from an Indian village, and--

JB: Sabina Sanchez.

SE: Sabina Sanchez, right. And I remember--when they came, we took them to Palisades Park in Santa Monica for a picnic. And she had never seen the ocean before, because she'd never ventured [very far] out of her village, which was in the mountains. And somebody--I don't know how it came up, but they said, "the world is round," and she hadn't ever considered that idea before. It was like--really? (laughter) And she didn't speak Spanish well, you know, she spoke her Indian language, but she didn't speak Spanish very well. But anyway, she had beautiful, beautiful embroidery, and I bought something from her. I have it--and I wore it a lot actually. Now it's too small. (laughter) A dress. And then the other two: oh--were the wood carver [Manuel Jiménez], and the guy who did--

JB: Pedro [Linares].

SE: --papier-mâché.

JB: Yes.

SE: And they were--they both brought children, I think, along, as assistants. But they were older--I mean adult children.

JB: I have pictures in the archive of Patrick and Edith, and, I think, all three of the artists, in East LA in the--

SE: Oh yeah, we went out to Plaza de la Raza.

JB: Plaza de la Raza, yes.

SE: Right, which is part of a big park [Lincoln Park] in East LA . . . I'm not sure exactly where it is--but it's south of Pasadena. (laughter)

JB: Yes, yes.

SE: And they had--they have an arts center there, and we had kind of a festival of some sort.

JB: Yes.

SE: Some kind of little, you know, weekend festival, and we set off the fireworks, the--

JB: Yes, the Judas figures.

SE: The Judas figures that go up into the air with the fireworks. Papier-mâché figures, and we set off one of those over the lake. (laughter)

JB: Oh. I wasn't there--

SE: And that was neat.

JB: --but the pictures looked really wonderful.

SE: Yeah, it was fun. French Folk Art [opened September 5, 1978] was a nice show. Close Packing and Cracking--Bradley Miller [opened October 23, 1978], he's working in LA now. He had been in a--

JB: Oh, he is?

SE: Yeah, oh yeah, for some time. And his wife's an artist, and he does wonderful photography now. Not so much ceramics, although **[1:00:00]** he still does it. But he does photography, still based on the same concept of bubbles, their patterns, and how they fit into space, and things like that.

JB: He was a protégé of Buckminster Fuller, or at least Buckminster Fuller had influenced his work a lot.

SE: Yeah, I think that's true. He probably worked with him a little, or knew him--or studied with him even, possibly.

JB: I think he [Fuller] wrote a short foreword to the catalog for Bradley Miller's [show]--

SE: Really? Oh that's possible. . . . I don't remember that, but anyway I run into him now and then. I didn't like the work all that much. I mean it was interesting, but it wasn't exciting to me. But Edith loved it. And other people liked it too, and he does--his work is beautiful--beautifully crafted in every way. [I like his current work a lot.]

JB: And it was mysterious how he--I think that was part of the fascination--it was mysterious how he, you know (technically) how he did it--

SE: Did it, yeah.

JB: --because it looked very natural, it looked very much like something you might find [in nature], and--

SE: Right, it looked like--some of them looked like oranges without the skin on. And they were round --but the edges were rounded off, it wasn't like you took the clay and smashed it all together, but somehow, he . . . put the clay into a form, so that if the segments, the orange segments all conformed in some natural way that shapes do, but he kept them separate when he did that. Separated--and then he put them in a rock tumbler to smooth it out. And that's how they [got] smoothed edges, so that they didn't look all squished together--but I mean they did look kind of like they'd been squished together, but they looked like an orange, like they had grown that way--as opposed to having been formed. And yeah, it was technically interesting.

I remember--oh my God--the Weaving Traditions of Highland Bolivia [opened December 18, 1978]--that was a really great show, and [it] was really fun to work with them—Bruce [Takami] and [Laurie Adelson], his girlfriend at the time . . . .

JB: They had lived--they were still living, at that time I think, in Bolivia.

SE: In Bolivia, back and forth, yeah. And then they moved to New Mexico. He was in New Mexico and may still be there. He wasn't well though, last I heard. And they had split up at some point. [Laurie married someone else. They live in Bolivia and work with native artisans.]

JB: Yeah, yeah.

SE: Greek Ethos: [Folk Art of the Hellenic World; opened February 20, 1979] with Basil--what's his last name?

JB: Jenkins.

SE: Jenkins. That was an interesting show too, that was in three galleries as I recall, and he had stuff from the Fowler collection, which ended up--that collection ended up being part of the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, [along with an endowment].

JB: In a very strange, separate gallery that bears no relationship to the rest of the collection.

SE: Right, it was a silver collection. But he was really--and I guess he's Greek too, so--on one side, and spoke Greek, and spent time there, and he had beautiful textiles. And he was an eccentric kind of guy.

Akari Light Sculptures [of Isamu Noguchi; opened May 1, 1979]--I remember helping install that. I remember Noguchi coming--and you know--blessing it--basically. [laughter]

JB: I was very excited about that, because of course I had learned about Noguchi in school, and it was just--

SE: Yeah, it was an amazing event to have him there. That Edith knew him--I mean that was--she just kind of popped these [legendary] people out of the air, you know? [laughter] And they would show up.

JB: Yes.

SE: And she just knew a lot of people. Traditional Toys of Japan [opened April 30, 1979]. That was Edith's show.

JB: Yes. Now that was on at the same time as the Akari Light show. The Akari [exhibition] was in the first-floor gallery and Traditional Toys of Japan on the second floor. But boy, that--there were a lot of objects in the Japanese toy show.

SE: Tons and tons. And that was really what made it good, because the objects in themselves often weren't that great. You know, just looking at one would be OK, you know? [laughter] But when you saw them all together--and she made--I remember she made a stair-step kind of a little pedestal, and I think she put *daruma*s on it, from teeny weeny ones--

JB: Yes, they were all *darumas*.

SE: --at the top, to great big ones at the bottom.

JB: Yes.

SE: And each stair-step was smaller than the next as you went up. That was fun, and she had a teahouse, was that the one where the teahouse was?

JB: Yes, I remember that there was sand that was carried from the first floor to the third floor for that, or for some--

SE: Or rocks--not rocks?

JB: Maybe, I don't know. But I--

SE: There was sand in the light sculpture show.

JB: We didn't have an elevator.

SE: No we didn't, we had to go up [the stairs].

JB: And so everything had to be carried.

SE: And, well, think about the J.B. Blunk **[1:05:00]** sculptures--those were humungous. And Louise Kruger later.

JB: That's amazing.

SE: And I'm looking to see now what the date was for the Japan--what was it? . . . . Japan Today, I'm talking about Japan Today.

JB: Oh, one of the "Today shows," yes. [laughter]

SE: Well it wasn't a show exactly. It was actually a big coordinated effort among all the different institutions, many different institutions. And she [Edith] heard about it after it was already really

pretty much organized, and she wanted it to come to LA. She couldn't imagine why they would avoid having it in LA, and she said, "It has to come here." [Later we found out that the NEA/NEH organizers wanted it to be in cities without a large Japanese population, cities that had little exposure to the culture.] And so she took it on, and we did everything mostly with local resources. We didn't have the exhibitions, and the [other] stuff that was traveling with the show. Except that we did get this teahouse that was made into a--that was made from a container, the kind of shipping containers that they use on boats, and--you know--move from a boat to a train to a truck. [The teahouse was mounted in the CAFAM parking lot during April and May 1979.] And somebody [the Japanese architect, Kisho Kurakawa] had designed and built a portable teahouse inside it, and we had tea ceremonies in it.

JB: We have some amazing photographs of that being installed with this huge crane coming in, and lifting it off of the truck, and gently putting it down in what was our parking lot there.

SE: That's right.

JB: And [on the outside] it was--it was just a plain, white, sort of--like a trailer. But then you stepped inside, into this other world of a teahouse.

SE: Right. [It did have doors for the guests to enter and a circular opening—maybe it was a window and a small door that the officiant came though, I think.]

JB: But was that at the same time as [Traditional Toys of Japan]?

SE: Well, let's see. It was April 28, you have here 1979. But I think --

JB: Yeah, well that was the same time then.

SE: That's when it started. It went on over several months.

JB: And the Akari and the toy shows opened on May first. [Traditional Toys of Japan opened on April 30, 1979.]

SE: That was our contribution [to Japan Today]. And there were other exhibitions elsewhere. And there were events. We didn't organize the other exhibitions. We got other [institutions] to do exhibitions to support it. And so it was a . . . city-wide thing, and there may have been--that may have been around the same time as the Lotus Festival in Echo Park, and things like that.

JB: But were you involved--I mean I think Willow was involved with the [other] Today shows--

SE: No, no, I was really involved with that one.

JB: You were?

SE: With that one, I helped--I was the administrative person on that one.

JB: I mean there was so much going on in '78 and '79, and--

SE: We were busy all the time. I was working til late at night almost every day--and on weekends, and--

JB: Yeah. And just looking at these--there were five or six catalogs published in that period of time. That was when [laughter] the assumption actually seemed to be that most of the time, we would have a catalog [for every exhibition].

SE: Oh yeah, it was important to do, because here we were dealing with this material that wasn't being dealt with elsewhere . . . and that's when, you know, there was a lot of push/pull about what would the content be . . . . Edith just wanted pictures. She just wanted to document the stuff, and say what it was. And I was always [advocating], "You have to have more than that." When we had guest curators, that happened. With the toys, it was much more difficult to get her to pull that out, and--

JB: To write something.

SE: With, you know, contemporary crafts, she didn't--it didn't occur to her what to say about that . . . . If the artist had something to say, fine. She didn't really--I think critics and all of that stuff didn't quite--wasn't in her purview. She hadn't been an art historian ever. . . . She . . . [had been] a dancer, and I think she was an English major, but--

JB: But she was very much into--

SE: --an intuitive, physical kind of response to everything, yeah. Which was fine--I mean it made things happen fast. [laughter] [Edith studied painting with Rico Lebrun after she was married and she was very much influenced by him.]

JB: Yes.

SE: And a lot happened because she was so open and [was] herself very curious, and people liked her, you know.

JB: I'm just, unfortunately, I'm looking at the clock, and we're almost to 12, and I do have to--we do have to **[1:10:00]** stop at one. We might be able to squeeze in a third session another time, but--

SE: OK, well, let's go on.

JB: I think maybe we should just talk about the shows now that you actually curated--

SE: Worked on, yeah.

JB: We talked about Four Leaders in Glass last time.

SE: Right, so we can skip that.

JB: And then I think the next one that you--of course by this time--

SE: I was coordinating almost everything, and also managing the installations.

JB: And the scheduling too, I guess.

SE: I was helping with that, yeah. . . . When we had these committees, PIC committees, I was always involved in organizing that, and you know, I just kind of did--I took what was [supposed to be] happening, and made it happen basically. Sometimes Edith was more involved, and sometimes she was less involved. And sometimes she would--I would draft essays for her, or you know, and at certain points, she just said, "OK, you sign it." . . . She'd say, "Draft this essay for me," and then she'd read it, and she'd say, "That's not from me, you better sign it," you know? "Better be from you." [laughter] Because she'd realize that [it didn't sound like] . . . something out of her head. Even though she thought it was going to be. [Actually, it may have been her way of seeing if what I would write was acceptable to her and having a way out if she didn't like my writing.]

JB: Now in the fall of 1980, as usual, the Festival of Masks was being planned. By that time, Willow was coordinating. And there was also this sort of tradition of having a mask-related exhibition about the same time. And there were two planned for--one which opened in September that I think Willow was very involved with--

SE: She was the curator of that.

JB: --Masks in Motion: [Form and Function; opened 9-24-80].

SE: And that was about mask performances.

JB: And those were traditional masks from various cultures.

SE: Yeah. I remember one mask came from Katherine White's collection, and it was this big, gory thing with big horns that came out of it; it was African and it had lots of things hanging off. I mean it was just, the materials were kind of rough, and it was really a scary-looking mask. Probably had teeth or something, and it was all real teeth, and real horns, and black, and you know, [had] gucky stuff on it. And she had--it came from over her bed. [laughter]

JB: That's interesting you should mention that. I know that later, many--quite a few years later--when Laurie Kalb was the Curator, and she was working on the [Guatemalan] mask collection of Jim--oh, what was his name?

SE: Oh yeah. The guy out in Malibu or somewhere.

JB: Yes, I'm just blanked now. [Jim Pieper] But anyway, she was very interested in how they decorated their bedroom with the masks, and part of the exhibition was a picture of--

SE: The bedroom?

JB: --of the bedroom, yeah. But then you developed--

SE: I want to say one other thing about Masks in Motion. Edith was using this really--these ochre colors, kind of pukey, ochre colors, you know?

JB: Yes. Actually ochre . . . was sort of--I didn't realize this until just recently, . . . that was kind of the Egg and the Eye [gallery] color. It came up--

SE: Often.

JB: --often, that color, on stationery and business cards and other publications.

SE: Oh yeah, and she used it in exhibitions often, of folk art. Especially African and African-oriented, or, you know, maybe Southeast Asian, or Japanese. She would use different kinds of ochres, but in this particular one, she used these pukey ochres. You know, kind of greenie, poopie-looking. And I said, "Edith, those colors are really ugly." [laughter] They were just horrendous. I said, "Are you sure you want to use those?" [She said], "Oh yeah, it'll be great." And then when we put the masks on them, of course--

JB: It was.

SE: --they're absolutely perfect. Especially the African ones at the time. The Japanese ochre was a softer, nicer ochre that she used with navy blue--and she [also] made a quilt [in those colors]. I don't know if you ever saw that quilt. For years and years, she worked on this quilt for their bed--to be their bedspread at home. And it was Japanese . . . *kasuri* fabrics. **[1:15:00]**

JB: Oh, *ikat* or--

SE: Like, *ikat* , but it was *kasuri.* [*Kasuri* is Japanese for fabric woven with fibers dyed before they are woven to create patterns and images in the fabric; it is an *ikat* technique.] And she had an ochre color and a navy-blue color, and she made a quilt out of it. And that was kind of--those were her signature colors, really.

So, OK next: Mask as Metaphor: [A Contemporary Artists' Invitational; opened November 30, 1980]. That was at Santa Monica Place. We were given a gallery there.

JB: Yes, tell about Gallery 3, because that's really a whole story in and of itself.

SE: Well, the Rouse Company I think it was--owned Santa Monica Place, and they had commissioned Frank Gehry to design it. And it was, you know, one of his early public buildings that was quite noted, although--

JB: Yes, unfortunately, it's just now being torn down, yeah.

SE: About to be torn down. But it never really functioned well. And . . . there was no way to get stuff into places. There wasn't like a big loading dock, or a place to unload things, and . . . I remember getting stuff into the third floor of this gallery, or fourth floor, wherever it was at the shopping center, it was really hard, if [what you were trying to move] was of any size. There was just a narrow corridor along the side of the building to come into it from the parking lot. Anyway, it was--who did we have design it? Did Frank Gehry design it, or-- ? . . . . An architect designed the

space for us. [Shan and Patrick Ela both believe it was Frank Gehry who designed the interior of Gallery 3.] . . . . [There was a big garage door along the entire length of the space, so that when it was rolled up, there was no barrier between the mall walk-way and the gallery space. They were separated by a wall with an opening to the gallery. The ceiling was stair-stepped. It stepped down from about the middle of the 12 or 13-foot ceiling toward the gallery wall, down to about six feet at its lowest. Inside the gallery, you saw the inverted stair-steps, which could function as shelves, where objects could be placed. I guess the intent was to open up the gallery box and give it some articulated space.] It was kind of an odd conceit, but anyway, that's what it was. And the thing [that was bad] about Gallery 3 was that people would walk in and be able to pick stuff up in the shop, and then they'd walk into the gallery, and [they] wouldn't [realize that] . . . it wasn't a shop. And so they'd be touching things, and picking things up, and kind of--it was too confusing.

JB: And there was also the problem of just where [the gallery] was located in relation to the [rest of the mall].

SE: Yes, it was in an out-of-the-way corner of the top floor. The furthest away from almost anything. [laughter] Any mode of getting up there.

JB: But it was free space, I guess.

SE: It was free. It was given to us. And later, USC had a gallery in there, and--

JB: And I think Cal Arts at one point.

SE: May have.

JB: There were several different agencies that--

SE: Several different--yeah. Different organizations had spaces in there. I think there was something even recently in there, somebody had something going on. Maybe the Santa Monica Museum . . . of Art.

JB: But we had it for just one year. Exactly one year.

SE: And that's all we wanted it, I think.

JB: Well we could have had it for more. But it was evidently seen—well, you should tell me--I had the impression that it was intended as a fund-raiser, or at least, to pay for itself. And it never did.

SE: No, the idea was that we would be able to sell more stuff in the shop, and we'd have another venue for showing. But of course, the exhibitions were expensive. For instance, [the] Mask as Metaphor [exhibition; opened October 16, 1980] had objects from all over the country shipped in, so we had shipping to pay for. And there were too many objects for the space, but we crammed them in . . . . But it was a really interesting show . . . and we had three or four performances--

three I think, performances--performance artists doing presentations in the [mall's community room]. And all of the artists, . . . who submitted work, were asked, because they had done things with mask imagery, masking imagery. So there was nobody there just making a piece--as in the original [Artists Invitational] show [in 1977 where] they were just making something that related to masking. All these artists [in 1980] had explored the theme, or [had done] something that looked mask-like . . . .

JB: But like the first show that was in '77 **[1:20:00],** I guess, they--these were contemporary artists.

SE: All contemporary artists, yeah. But I . . . wanted objects that people had an investment in, you know, that . . . it was part of the work that they did. And some of them were unknown, totally unknown, and some of them were really famous, like Claire Falkenstein and--

JB: And Claes Oldenburg?

SE: Yeah.

JB: Yeah. Was there an Andy Warhol?

SE: No, I don't think so.

JB: There were a few [other] famous artists included . . .

SE: [For example: Clayton Bailey, Tony Berlant, Joe Bova, Robert Brady, Carole Caroompas, Walter Gabrielson, George Herms, Suzanne Lacy, Roy Lichenstein, Ken D. Little, Michael C. McMillen, K. Lee Manuel, Lee Mullican, Pierre Picot, Rachel Rosenthat, Betye Saar, Patti Warashina, William Wegman, Ruth Weisberg, John M. White, Robert Wilhite, and Beatrice Wood.]

JB: I know that we also have either a video of those performances, or an audiotape. There is documentation of those performances [in the CAFAM Records at UCLA].

SE: There are photographs, I know. I remember that Rachel was there once with her rat on her shoulder, Tatty Waddles. [laughter]

JB: So, let's just talk about Gallery 3 a little bit more. There were . . . [six] shows done there before it closed, and they were all contemporary shows. [Four exhibitions were organized exclusively for Gallery 3; two (Made in L.A. and Finland Designs) were extensions of exhibitions mounted in the 5814 Wilshire galleries.]

SE: Yes.

JB: Tell a little bit about, you know, the concept for the gallery. Because you worked on--you helped with the planning, didn't you, of the gallery?

SE: Somewhat. I mean I didn't have anything to do with how it was designed. . . . There were [walls] on wheels and we could move them around. The idea was to show contemporary art in Santa Monica, where maybe there would be a big audience for it.

JB: . . . . You and Max went out to the beach and shot some photographs for the [poster].

SE: Well, what we did was, we were working with these--this graphic design team, they were a couple. And I can't remember their names, but they--neither one of them were born in the United States, as I recall. [The poster was designed by Farah Fotouhi and Jorge Alonso.] A really nice, young, good-looking couple, and they did the poster, and the idea was to make a "three" out of sand. So we like made a sandcastle in the shape of a [number] three, or like a graphic three.

JB: Yeah. It's a gorgeous poster.

SE: It's beautiful, yeah. Max actually made the "3"; I think that was their concept, and Max made the "3" [out of sand]. And we went--I went out to help, and that was photographed, and they were involved for a while doing things, helping. On a volunteer basis. And that's--you know--and we installed things there, and I managed the installations like I always did.

JB: Now Susan and Ann were also involved, though, I believe. Or was that only in the shop part of Gallery 3?

SE: No, they did Introductions: Twelve Artists, an Invitational Exhibition [opened November 21, 1980]. They organized that. They had a Buster Simpson and Richard Posner [show], and--

JB: But in terms of the planning and organization of the Gallery itself--

SE: Yeah, that was from the Program Department, yeah. [They also were on the PIC committee at times.] But they had a lot to do with it [with Gallery 3], because of the--it was meant to be a selling space. And it was a constant frustration that the separation between the two was not--

JB: Distinct.

SE: --obvious. It wasn't obvious to anybody coming in. First of all, most people visiting had never heard of the Craft and Folk Art Museum--they were just shoppers, right? [And the signage wasn't good.]

JB: Right.

SE: And they didn't--it didn't occur to them that there would be such a [museum] space there, and it was open--all open, you know? [There was no front door.] You just walked right in. And they would look at the cups, and here were these $20 [handmade] cups or something, and they could go buy a $3 or $4 mug somewhere else [in the mall]. And they didn't get it.

JB: Yes.

SE: They didn't get it at all, and--I'm trying to see [on the exhibition list]: Two Schools of Fish: Buster Simpson and Richard Posner [opened June 19, 1981] was there, and that was again Ann and Susan.

JB: Oh, I thought that you had curated that show. Two Schools of Fish, you didn't curate that show? . . . I remember associating you with it.

SE: [Susan Skinner suggested the artists and I organized the show with Buster and Richard.]

JB: That was the closing show. [Actually, the second section of Finland Designs (opened August 5, 1981 and closed September 27, 1981) was the last exhibition in Gallery 3.]

SE: --Susan [Skinner] knew both of them . . . . She might have suggested that we do it, and then I put it together.

JB: That was a beautiful show; I remember, in particular, **[1:25:00]** the--was it Posner's fish that were hanging--sort of like mobiles?

SE: No, no, that was Buster's. [Richard's were small sculptures on pedestals.] See, there's one of them up there. [Shan points to a Buster Simpson fish sculpture on a shelf in the room where we are talking.]

JB: Oh yes, yes.

SE: That's meant to be on a pole. [Like a] wind vane.

JB: And they were somehow outside, some of them--

SE: Yeah, he had them hanging. There were these clerestory windows at the very top of the [central court of the] mall.

JB: The mall, yes.

SE: [Buster suspended mobiles from the roof outside and they could be seen though those windows. The mobiles had decorated metal cut-outs in the shape of salmon, hanging as though on a fishing line, with old boots and other trash that might be found floating in rivers, as though it was all caught along one long line.]

You know, there was an atrium that went all the way up and down, and the stores were around the atrium--and on all the levels, and so you could see these sparkly--he had mirrors on them, and tin can tails, and fork fins, and [splashes of brightly colored paint]--and that kind of paper that's laser paper that has--

JB: Yes, yes.

SE: --that sparkles, you know, shimmers, changes [colors with movement] in the sunlight--he had those hanging. [One side of the fish was shiny and colorful, but the other side was smeared with tar and a few mirror mosaics were embedded in that.] The fish mouths were made from wood painted black. The mirror mosaics and bits of textured plastic sheets shimmered, reflecting changing colors and the movement in the sunlight. Next to the museum space there were some floor-to-ceiling windows. He hung more mobiles outside those windows that could be seen [on

the busy 4th Street side of the mall . . . . And then in the Gallery, he had other things, . . . [that] related to the same concept of pollution in the waterways, including the same kinds of salmon objects that were meant to be mounted on poles as wind vanes, and some prints on paper he made using whole salmons and tar from the Tar Pits. Those were pretty messy to handle!

I think Richard and Buster made a little book together, not exactly a catalog, but elaborating on their themes. Do you have that? It's a small book.

JB: Yes, oh yes.

SE: [Richard cast clear glass in forms of objects that might be trash found in waterways. These object forms were incongruously connected to fish shapes, like small totem poles. Both Buster and Richard's titles were wonderfully clever puns and social comments.]

And the two artists were friendly. [Buster lived in Seattle permanently and Richard was living there at the time. He was originally from L.A. [Posner died in 2011.] Buster periodically would work in glass, and because he lived in Seattle, he was almost considered part of the glass community. But he wasn't really a glass artist per se. He was more of an installation/conceptual kind of guy. . . [Because his work usually functions in some way and has a handmade ethic, he fit into the museum's craft mandate.]

Shuji Asada [opened April 29, 1981] was there. I worked on that [show] closely with him and his friend who [he worked for]--he actually made commercially-produced rugs, designed them, and the company that sold--produced and sold--them was based in New York, and . . . they had a showroom in New York, and that's how [Shuji's designs] sold in the United States anyway. He came out, and was involved, and I showed them around--I also entertained everybody, I was [laughter] showing them around LA, and feeding them dinner and stuff like that.

JB: Oh my goodness.

SE: Not at home--but you know.

JB: Yeah. And Introductions of course, that was curated by Ann and Susan. But who was the gallery manager, or the--

SE: Oh, was it Gisella? Gisella--was that her name? . . .

JB: I thought Susan was involved.

SE: She was involved, they all—

JB: Yeah, but not on a daily basis, I guess.

SE: They went back and forth. [Ann and Susan were the buyers and set up the displays, just as they did in the main shop on Wilshire.] They would spend some time there during the week, each of

them, but there *was* somebody who was in charge there, I don't remember who right now. I mean if you brought up the name I'd probably remember who she was . . . .

Mask as Metaphor went to--was also shown at Security Pacific. Tressa Miller was running the art program there, downtown. Made in LA: Contemporary Crafts '81 [opened January 15, 1982 in Washington, DC] --that was Bernard [Kester], but I worked really closely with him on that.

JB: Yes, that was another very big show with an important catalog.

SE: Yeah, contemporary crafts. And Murals of Aztlan: Street Painters of East Los [opened April 28, 1981] was organized by Frank Romero.

JB: Yes, that was quite an amazing show. Talk about that show . . . .

SE: Well we had muralists--LA muralists who had--most of whom had come of age in the '70s--'60s and '70s--late '60s and '70s. [They were] Chicano--they--some worked in teams, some not. And they came and made murals in the [5814 Wilshire] galleries. We put up these canvases--big, huge, [wall-sized] canvases--and some of them were gigantic.

JB: Blank canvases?

SE: Blank canvases, right.

JB: In both the first and . . . third floor galleries?

SE: That's correct, and they--the artists came, and for a month, they were painting their murals, and all the--we had tarps all over the floors, [scaffolding], and ladders, and I don't know--sprayers and—[laughter]

JB: And Tom Vinetz, the photographer, came at least once a week, and we have--God, I think--thousands**, [1:30:00]** certainly hundreds and hundreds of slides [that show the progress on the murals].

SE: And there was also--a filmmaker, [who] came and made a film of it. [James Tartan, editor; Bronson Films, 1981.]

JB: Yes, yes.

SE: And so for a month, people came and watched the muralists painting their murals, and then for a month after, maybe, they were up [on display]. And the artists would [sometimes] come and talk, you know, we'd have an artist in there talking to people when they came. They [took turns doing] that. And so it was quite an exceptional thing. And I was thinking it was up during the Mask Festival, but it wasn't. No. But anyway, it was a really exciting show. It was Carlos Almaraz, East Los Street Scapers [David Botello, Wayne Healy, and George Yepes], Judith Baca--not Judith Baca.

JB: Judithe Hernandez.

SE: Hernandez. Willy Herron and Gronk worked together. And--

JB: Yeah, there were one or two others—well, Frank [Romero], of course.

SE: Frank did one, and John Valadez [and Carlos Almaraz.]

JB: Yes, yes. All of whom--you know, they were established at that time, but they became quite famous later. [Frank, John, Carlos, and Magu—who was not in that show—were once a collective called Los Four. They were the first Chicano artists to be shown at LACMA; that was in 1974.]

SE: Yeah, yeah, they're still showing. And more respectably. [laughter]

JB: And those--there were a couple of other things that I thought were noteworthy. The murals themselves were saved. I'm not sure where they are now--

SE: Well, Frank had [some of] them rolled up in his backyard for a while; I don't know what condition they're in.

JB: They--some of them were--did travel to Paris, to somewhere in France.

SE: Oh yeah, they had--there was a show of Chicano art in France [Demon et Anges].

JB: Yes.

SE: And Spain too, maybe--but definitely in France at the--at the Pompidou.

JB: At the Pompidou, that's what I thought, yeah. [Some of the murals traveled to Paris, Barcelona, Nantes, and Stockholm; a catalog for it was published in Barcelona.]

SE: Yeah, and some of . . . [the murals] did go [to the Pompidou], but some of them, I think, didn't weather well, because they were left outside . . . . [They were so big; the artists didn't have room to store them.]

JB: And the other thing about that show was it was reviewed [in *Artweek*, June 20, 1981] by a reviewer named, I think, Shifra Goldman, in a way that was quite disappointing . . . certainly to the muralists. . . . Her review was almost entirely about what she thought was basically the wrong concept for murals--that murals by definition should be outside, and that by putting the murals inside this building on the west side of LA, where they were not going to be seen, she felt, by, you know, enough people in Los Angeles, that this was really an elitist point of view.

SE: Well, she didn't--you know, she didn't take into account that all of these artists by then were making paintings that were being sold in galleries. And the idea for this was to really watch artists working on a grand scale [as they had done on public walls]. And have the public actually be able to interact with people who did street paintings.

JB: Which they did.

SE: Now--you couldn't have [the public] out on the freeway, like they did . . . [in] 1984 for the--

JB: Olympics.

SE: --Olympics, [when] they were out on the freeways--you couldn't get people to talk to them there, and often they were in neighborhoods, and places where, you know, they weren't going to be seen by very many people except [in] the neighborhood. This was an expansion of the idea, and the work that was produced was gorgeous. Really beautiful paintings were produced, and--but Shifra was teaching--maybe at Cal State Northridge, or Cal State LA--or somewhere like that. And she is definitely a--what do you call it--who's the communist theorist, the original theorist--

JB: Well Marx, I mean she's a [overlapping dialogue; inaudible]--

SE: --Marxist. She's a Marxist art historian, and she is Hispanic herself, and she studies Hispanic [culture], and you know, that's--that milieu, that's her realm. And she was being [a bit contrary] about it, which is fine, but it was disappointing, because she was probably the major reviewer of the show.

JB: Yes. I don't know that it was really reviewed [anywhere else]; it was publicized in a lot of media, but I think that was one of the only actual reviews.

SE: Christopher Knight, or Suzanne Muchnic, neither one of them did it?

JB: I don't--I'm not sure, but that's my recollection. **[1:35:00]** . . . I think probably [it was] a good thing that [Goldman's review was published], because it drew attention to these issues. But ironically, I think, more [of a certain group of] people were able to see the process of mural-making at the Craft and Folk Art Museum than maybe had ever [before]--

SE: Well, you know, originally, her problem with it, I think, was--originally, the murals that these muralists did were political in nature. And while there was still some of that similar content in the work that they did in the [CAFAM] gallery, I think the artists saw themselves as part of a larger tradition also. You know, dating back to the pre-Renaissance era, when people--artists made murals in public spaces--and reflected the community. And they were, in this way, they were demonstrating basically their processes, and it was amazing to see how big--how they painted these big things.

JB: Absolutely, and there--I think there were--there was a lot of education activity that also went on--there were lectures and seminars--

SE: Yeah, lots of school groups.

JB: --and even some tours to murals in East LA.

SE: Oh yeah, we did mural tours. I mean it wasn't like we ignored the fact of where they--from whence they came. And even Judith Baca [had started] SPARC (Social and Public Arts Resource Center), which is--was then creating murals, and involving students with her to make these big murals--the Tujunga Wash mural [is an on-going project]--and portable murals. They were doing actually the same kind of thing--they were making portable murals--and putting them around in different places [in the community]. [Judith Baca was not included in the Murals of Aztlan exhibition because it focused on those who mostly worked in East L.A.]

JB: Yes. Well it was a fascinating show, and there's a huge amount of documentation of it in the CAFAM archives [at UCLA Library's Special Collections].

SE: I found what Shifra wrote rather façile, and sort of knee-jerk. But, anyway--not very thoughtful. OK, so--

JB: So maybe we should, Shan, talk about John Cederquist [opened June 10, 1983], which, I think, was the next show that you curated.

SE: Yeah, well, I was really involved in Fantasy in the Industrial Revolution: [Toys from Mid-19th – Mid-20th Centuries; opened November 24, 1981], with that curator, but he was a collector.

JB: Collector, right, yeah, [Dr. Robert Scoren]. [Nancy Romero titled the show and wrote the wall text for it; Dr. Scoren was not too happy with the industrial revolution theme.]

SE: And [I was involved] with Made in LA, and Enamellists: Vera Ronnen-Wall, June Schwarcz, William Harper [opened March 17, 1982]; I think I did that catalog. I wrote for that catalog.

JB: Oh yes.

SE: Vera Ronnen [made the exterior] enamel [panels] at the--the Jewish museum, what's it called?

JB: Skirball?

SE: At the Skirball Center, yeah, and her son-in-law, actually--I think it was her son-in-law, [Moshe Safdie, who was] the architect for that.

JB: Oh, now the next one that's listed--Guardians of Happiness [opened May 18, 1982], you started to tell us a story about a discussion . . . you had with Edith [about that].

SE: Oh well, because the objects--

JB: Let's go back and finish that up . . . .

SE: We had said that the objects arrived the night of--in their crates the night of the opening [after the guests arrived]--after the shaman, the local Korean shaman, had performed. She was actually quite a sophisticated woman and a dancer. And she had performed, and then in came these crates, with the moving guys from the truck, and they sat around, and we had wine and [laughter] took pictures.

JB: This was the Korean folk art show?

SE: Korean folk art. [The title was] Guardians of Happiness, right. And it was in three galleries, and we had prepared the galleries, we were ready to hang, but there had been no objects, because . . . [of] what we discussed before--the hold-up. Anyway--so we worked over the weekend, but I didn't make them stay late at night, and work all night, and all that kind of stuff to get it up, so [that] by Tuesday it would be open. You know--and Edith really wanted that show up [by Tuesday]. Because it was a big show, we'd publicized it well, it had a lot of funding, and all of that. And I refused to make the crew work late, because I thought it--I thought we were all worn out--and it wasn't the way we should continue to proceed, and we'd been talking about this for a long time, how we couldn't put that kind of demand on staff over and over again.

And finally, I said, "Edith, it's not my fault that these things arrived late, and I'm not keeping people later than 6 o'clock." Or something like that. And she said, "Yes, it is your fault." And meaning--I think what she was thinking was it was my fault it wasn't getting up on time, and you know, as fast as it should, but I took it very badly, and I said, "All right," and by then I had horrible stomachaches. **[1:40:00]** I was having really bad stomachaches from the stress, and—[because] of working so hard, and so many hours, and she wasn't easy at all. And you know, she would leave instructions, and you'd do what you thought she told you to do, and [then] she'd come in and change it all ten minutes before the opening. But she wouldn't be there when you needed her, you know? At that point. And--some of the time--sometimes she couldn't help it--but anyway, ultimately, I went home, and I said, "All right, I'm out of here." And I went home, and she called me up and said, "Come back in." I said, "I don't think I can. My stomach hurts. [laughter] I'm really in pain."

JB: Now this was not on opening night--this was . . . .

SE: Oh I don't know, maybe it was on a Tuesday night and it was--maybe they were Tuesday night openings, usually. And it was the next day--yeah it was during the week--because it must have been. It was during the week, and I wasn't keeping them really late. I had them working, but I wasn't keeping them terribly late. You know, we worked a long day, but then they went home. And she didn't like that, she wanted them to work until it was done, and I was worried about their safety, and I had started to be very conscious of safety issues. Because we were using power tools, and the guys were--you know--and these were [art] objects where the safety of the objects was in play, because there were some quite large paintings, and things like that. So, I went home for a day or two, and came back. I don't remember how I got back, but I did come back. She made it clear that she was sorry. [laughter] And Mike meanwhile was becoming--by then I was married, and Mike meanwhile was becoming more and more angry about the demands put on me. Of course, from his point of view, it was time taken away from his--paying attention to him. [laughter]

JB: Yes. Well, I can relate to that, yes. All of our significant others were really sacrificing a lot.

SE: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And, you know, Mike had a son--he was with us on weekends . . . and, you know, it was hard.

JB: Well I hope we'll have time to talk more about Mike's involvement later on, but let's forge ahead and talk about just a couple more shows.

SE: American Porcelain: [New Expressions in an Ancient Art; opened August 3, 1982] . . . . That was the first show that I really, really . . . designed a major installation for. And that was a beautiful show, it was a gorgeous show. I used porcelain colors, you know, like the clay color itself, this kind of creamy white, and, you know, sea foam [celadon] blue and green. I used those colors . . . on the walls, and I made some angled, sculptural kinds of pedestals that were in themselves interestingly shaped and placed, and also used some things that were--I mean reused other parts of previous installations, but the thing [I most remember] about it was Bernard Kester came in, and told me how beautiful it was, and how much he really liked it. And that was kind of--

JB: And he did not give his blessing easily, no.

SE: He didn't give out compliments, no. I knew Bernard first from my roommate, Patty Sue Jones, who was his student. And he was a tough guy, you know? He was really tough on the students. And very critical, and so when he gave me this [compliment]--that was really a big deal to me.

JB: Yeah.

SE: Art of the Dark Crystal [opened October 19, 1982], I worked really closely with [Leslee] Asch. . . . Oh, we're still [in touch]--

SE: Art of the Dark Crystal was [an exhibition of materials from *The Dark Crystal*], a 1982 Jim Henson [and Frank Oz] movie [that used ground-breaking animatronics], and we took the artifacts and puppets from that movie--it was an puppetry movie. [Some puppets were larger than people and had very complex workings.] And we took the artifacts and the sets--the objects made for the sets--and the costuming, [which] was all handmade, and we had all these objects in the show, and Leslee Asch was [Henson's] curator at that point. She originally had been a puppet-maker, and run the puppetry shop--the "creature shop," I think it was called. Anyway, so we worked with them on that, and I was really involved with that. And [the exhibition] toured after it left us. That was a wonderful movie that didn't get much play, I don't know why. **[1:45:00]**

And Black Folk Art in America, 1930 – 1980; [opened December 7, 1982], Edith hired a black architect, who worked for Gruen--I think Victor Gruen, or somebody like that--to design it, and then she redid some of his installation, which didn't make him happy, I remember.

JB: That was an enormous show--that was in three--at least three locations. [It had been organized by the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C.

SE: All three galleries.

JB: We had the Annex at that time.

SE: We had the Annex at that time, yeah. [The Annex was the upper floor of a building on the northeast corner of Curson and Wilshire.] Guardians of Happiness was also in all three galleries. Handmade in Nepal [opened February 22, 1983]--I did that installation with Judith, whatever her name was, the curator, who lived in Nepal and was--

JB: Chase?

SE: It was Chase--and she led treks into the Himalayas, and--

JB: And there was a related--the Four Villages: [Architecture in Nepal; also opened February 22, 1983] show was related.

SE: Right, and that was--

JB: It was photographs, mostly, of--

SE: Yeah, it was big mural photographs [and] we made [the] big photo murals into a book [with a lot of text]. And Dextra Frankel's partner at the time, Tom Harmon, designed it. And [the curator's] name was--I forget right now [Katherine Blair].

John Cederquist: Deceptions [opened June 10, 1983]. I actually . . . organized it with John. That was my first solo exhibition--solo show that I organized, I think.

JB: Yes, we didn't very often show--have one-artist shows.

SE: No, because there was so much to show and so little space, and you know, there was--it was—"pack it in, boy!" [laughter]

JB: Yeah. And yet I think that the ones that we *did* have attracted more critical attention. Art reviewers were--tended to be more [interested in those].-

SE: Yeah, you know . . . just on that topic, when I was curator at the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers, I was invited to be part of a--kind of a roundtable discussion, organized by [William] Rubin, . . . who was the Senior Curator at MoMA.

JB: Oh, at MoMA, yeah.

SE: Yeah, at MoMA. And we discussed—[Rubin's] point of view at that moment was that solo shows were less rigorous than group shows—[less] intellectually rigorous. And, of course, it could be either way, and I said, "well, you know, . . . I've been wanting to do more solo shows, because . . . the group shows we've been doing . . . and some that I've been involved with before, were around some kind of theme, and the theme itself wasn't all that important." [laughter] You know,

animals or portraits, or perspective, or something like that, and sometimes that seemed to me like you couldn't get as in-depth into the real artwork.

JB: Right.

SE: The artwork itself--and I was wanting to do more important solo shows, or two-person shows. And so that was an interesting discussion that we had about that, and he . . . we engaged--he was engaged in that idea, which was you know--which was more important to do? What kind of show?

JB: So did you know John Cederquist before you [worked on his show]?

SE: Yeah, a little, because of the [Contemporary] Craft Council, being involved with . . . [CAFAM's] Craft Council. He was involved with that. A lovely guy, just darling. Nice guy. And so clever, and he's gone on to have major books published with long, involved essays--he has one book [that is a] long, involved essay by a New York critic [Arthur Coleman Danto] who's really a philosopher, but got into art criticism quite a bit, and is interested in craft media. And he wrote a book with--he wrote several books--he's written a lot of books. [Arthur Danto wrote an essay for the Oakland Museum of California's catalog in 1997, *The Art of John Cederquist: Reality of Illusion*.] . . But anyway, I wrote--I did this exhibition of [Cederquist's] artwork, which was--he deals with perspective in--two-dimensional perspective--of three-dimensional objects. Furniture, actually--they're actually functional furniture most of the time, not always. And from one point of view, they look like they're a regular, three- dimensional, normal object, a chair or a table. But as soon as you move out of that specific point of view, of course, they're all misshapen and out of--

JB: Askew.

SE: --and askew, because, yeah, he's made them to work from one point of view, and from any other point of view, they don't work. [laughter] . . . , it's what they are. So, **[1:50:00]** that was fun. And he was influenced by cartoons, so I got . . . permission to reprint a Popeye cartoon with a chair in it that was just like one of the chairs he had made--and it was a really fun show. And the photography was fun, and--

JB: And there was a nice catalog.

SE: The catalog was beautiful, and I wrote a pretty good essay, and it got--part of it got reprinted in *American Craft Magazine*, and then they asked me to keep writing, and I never could manage to do that, but I could have. [laughter]

JB: *American Craft Magazine*.

SE: Yeah. They wanted more writing from me, but I just never got to do it, it was--I couldn't do that many things.

JB: Well, you were associated later with the American Craft Council in a project after you went to New York.

SE: Right.

JB: Well, I would like to-- let's just talk about Ebendorf and Ross, and then I want to talk a little bit more about other things. [laughter] Other than exhibitions--in the time we have left.

SE: OK.

JB: Now I understand that Ebendorf and Ross--the reason I mention that is because that was the other show that you curated, isn't that right? [Ebendorf and Ross: Finding the Form; opened November 23, 1983]

SE: I did curate it, but Robert Ebendorf and Ivy Ross came to us through Ann [Robbins], that was Ann and Susan Skinner. And I think maybe Susan had more to do with it maybe than Ann did. But I didn't know it at the time. Because I gave Ann a lot of credit--and not Susan.

JB: Oh--oh dear.

SE: But I found out about it later. Maybe I put Susan's name in somehow in the credit--anyway that was an interesting show too. She did really commercial jewelry design in plastics and he did one-of-a-kind art jewelry. Each piece was an art object. But they were married, or living together at the time--I don't know if they were married then. But it was a nice show, about jewelry--his in particular. So I did interviews [over the phone] of him that I was able to draw labeling from.

JB: Did you design the installation for that show?

SE: Probably, yeah.

JB: Because I think it's always interesting to have that problem of displaying very small pieces.

SE: Well, his pieces were . . . made with their own display mechanism. [They were removable elements of assemblages.] And weren't too hard to hang, and hers went into cases . . . . There may have been some kind of garment too that went [with them]--that she had designed--that made kind of a nice focal point. And his work was like collage, basically, or assemblage, you know; it was made from found things, [many] materials. And hers was plastic--and graphic--very bold and graphic--whereas his was very [intricate], and--and he was significantly older. He may even have been a teacher of hers, or some kind of mentor to her.

JB: It's very frustrating not to be able to talk more about exhibitions, but I think in the interest of time, we've got to move on, and hopefully we'll have time to come back. But I would like to take a few minutes to talk [about Mike Kaiser]; we mentioned Mike briefly. You had married. When were you married?

SE: Nineteen-eighty-two.

JB: Eighty-two.

SE: August 15th.

JB: And you had been involved with the Contemporary Craft Council for a couple of years at that point.

SE: Yeah, I helped start it with Bernard, and Laura Andreson came [to the early meetings], and Dora Delarios.

JB: Right, and then at some point, you started having auctions, and the reason I think of Mike in connection with those--the Contemporary Craft Auctions--is because he was the auctioneer for [them].

SE: That's right, he was.

JB: How did that evolve?

SE: Well, you know, Mike had been part of the Synanon community for many years.

JB: Oh, which Nina Green, I think, was [part of] also.

SE: Right, Nina introduced us.

JB: Oh, I guess I knew that, and I'd forgotten.

SE: Yes, Nina introduced us.

JB: Interesting.

SE: She was dating Jonas Rosenfield, whom she married [in 1982]-- just two weeks before we got married.

JB: I remember that.

SE: Jonas and his wife, who had died a few months before Nina met him--after a long illness with cancer--she and Jonas had been Mike's parents' closest friends. And they were--Mike's father **[1:55:00]** and Jonas--were involved in movie advertising. And they had known each other from work and both families lived in Roslyn, New York, where the kids grew up--their kids grew up. And Jonas and Nina were dating, . . . and Mike had left Synanon and was working for Jonas. But in Synanon they often had auctions of things. And they worked with professional auctioneers, I can't remember what on--I guess equipment, or whatever--I don't know—

JB: But he knew the general routine [of running an auction].

SE: He knew the routine, right. And . . . he's a good thinker on his feet, and he's clever, and . . . so he's kind of fun. . . . The first auction was out at that clay studio and shop.

JB: Oh yes, which is still going.

SE: Yeah. What's the name of it?

JB: Clayhouse.

SE: Clayhouse, on Santa Monica Boulevard, right?

JB: Yes, yeah.

SE: Just on the border of Santa Monica and West LA.

JB: I just noticed it a few weeks ago.

SE: Clayhouse, right. It was . . . owned at that point by Ken Cathagan and what's her name? Natalie Neith, who don't own it anymore--but anyway, . . . they were involved in the Craft Council a lot. And so . . . we were having this auction, and Mike--that was one of our earliest dates. And Patrick [Ela] was auctioneer, and he just--Mike said, "This is really not going anywhere." He said, "First of all, you've given people too much wine, and they're sleepy." He said, "You've got to wake them up." So somehow, Dora was standing around, she heard him talking like this, [and] she went and pulled Patrick aside, and said, "Mike's going to take over now." [laughter]

JB: Oh really? Oh my God! [laughter] What did Mike think about that?

SE: Oh he was totally up for it. He just got right up there and snapped to, and started selling things.

JB: Wow. And had he had any experience with--not with auctioning--

SE: With crafts?

JB: Yeah.

SE: Not really, no.

JB: But that didn't really matter.

SE: But you know, somebody would tell him what it was, and he'd deal with it from there.

JB: Yeah.

SE: Really, the point was to get people interested. And I think Sheri Warner may have been standing there telling him what was going on, who the artist was. I mean she might have actually talked about it [and] he just handled the technical auctioning part, and made people laugh, and pointed them out, and put them on the spot, and bounced a few bids off the walls, and, you know, that kind of thing. [laughter]

JB: And by that time, of course, he probably had been to openings with you?

SE: No, I think this was the first month we knew each other. He may have been to an opening or two. What was the date of that [auction]; do you have any idea? We met in early October of 1981. . .

[So that auction must have been in November 1981.] And then the next year we did it [organized another auction].

JB: So he did that [was auctioneer for the Contemporary Craft Council auctions] for several years running, I guess.

SE: Yeah, three maybe [two auctions after the first one].

JB: You went to New York in December of '84, I believe.

SE: Right, that's when I left. [I left L.A. in November. We were in our new house for the first snowfall on Thanksgiving.]

JB: OK, so--now I'm just going to have to skip a few things [that I wanted to talk about]. I do want to mention the puzzle show [Puzzles Old and New: Headcrackers, Patience Provers, and Other Tactile Teasers; opened November 25, 1986], because that was such an enormous undertaking, and you had gotten started on the planning for that before you left. Part of the--now you correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm just going to summarize this to save a little time. I understand that part of CAFAM's agreement with Jerry Slocum, the collector of these amazing mechanical puzzles, was that we would help in the cataloging of the puzzles. And that really needed to be done anyway, in order to organize the show.

SE: Well yeah, that's right, exactly**. [2:00:00]** You know, he was in the process of it, but he worked full-time, and [laughter] he was an engineer. And it wasn't--you know, it needed to be done faster, that's all.

JB: Tell about his collection, and where it was kept.

SE: Well, he had built a little house off of his--he had a garage/house kind of building in the back of his--

JB: The Puzzle House.

SE: Yeah, it was called the Puzzle House, in the back of his home. And his wife had a big--instead of the lawn, she had a big vegetable garden in front of it, in between. And his--he stored his puzzles--the majority of his puzzles were stored in the [actual] garage--but then in the Puzzle House, downstairs, was his library. And upstairs was his exhibit space, and he had lots and lots of cases, you know, just kind of those Scandinavian glass cases with clips. I guess they're German--whatever they are. It's a common kind of display case, and he put all his best stuff out there. And he had a table in the middle. And flat files, and a little closet that had some stuff in it.

JB: It was really a beautiful space as I recall.

SE: Oh it was fabulous for what he was--I mean amazing for what he was doing--and he crammed a lot of stuff in there. And so the best things were [there]--that's where we cataloged; we didn't

catalog what was in the garage really, we cataloged what was in that space [the Puzzle House] mostly.

JB: But there must have been--there were certainly hundreds of puzzles that we cataloged.

SE: Probably 1,000.

JB: Yeah.

SE: Because there were like 800 objects-- in the show.

JB: In the show. Yes, and I believe that almost everybody on the CAFAM staff got involved with that at one time or another.

SE: Probably.

JB: At least--there were at least four or five of us that went there regularly, [at least once a week], and did some work. And you were, by this time, you had had to leave to go to New York [because] Mike had another job--in New York, I believe . . . .

SE: Yeah, but I think we were pretty much finished with the cataloging.

JB: Oh were we--before you left?

SE: I don't know for sure, but I kind of think so . . . . Because what I worked on was the list, you know, the labeling, when I was in New York; I worked on the labeling and [the check list].

JB: Well, the puzzle show itself opened in November, the end of November in 1986.

SE: Right.

JB: So you had been in New York for a couple of years by that point.

SE: Right. And we were designing the installations with Jack [Botermans].

JB: So you must have gone back and forth several times.

SE: I—well, you know, our families were here, so we did come back.

JB: Sure.

SE: I don't know if I came specifically for it, or if I just spent time when we were in California working on it.

JB: So maybe you were doing a lot just by telephone and--

SE: Computer, and--

JB: --and computer . . . .

SE: So, I'm sure that a lot of the cataloging was done by the time I left. There may have been some more going on afterwards, but I was doing the labels, which were--just took forever. I did the text-

-there was text for each of ten different sections, and then there was an introductory section that had five or six text panels, with a puzzle or two [in each one] as examples. And I got Martin Gardner to write--

JB: The science writer?

SE: The science writer--to write about . . . puzzles and math, or something.

JB: There was a kind of a theme of art and science going on.

SE: Art and design--and mathematics, because of course, scientists and mathematicians tended to be the type of person most interested in puzzles, at least in the kind that had many parts that you put together.

JB: And Jerry was very involved; he may have been the founder of a club, an organization of [puzzle collectors].

SE: The International Puzzle Party.

JB: And so that--and there was an annual party I think.

SE: Yes, at first at his house. But then it started being all over the world; I went to the one in Japan.

JB: Oh. Well, so that event, and the people who attended, became kind of a focal point around the opening of the show, I think, or near to the **[2:05:00]** opening.

SE: Yes, because most of them were the people we borrowed from. We borrowed from that group of collectors.

JB: Oh yes, of course, it wasn't just Jerry's collection. . . .

SE: Right. There were certain [things]--like jigsaw puzzles--that he didn't have a really great--you know--a wide grouping of. . . . It was nice to borrow from other collectors, actually.

JB: Oh sure, sure. So--

SE: We had Japanese, English. Maybe a Dutch--and other American collectors; maybe a Canadian.

JB: And a wonderful book--not really a catalog--but a book was published in conjunction with that, and I think [the publishers] were Dutch.

SE: Jack Botermans was the . . . exhibition designer; he's the graphic designer and he worked with a publishing company that published the book. He has published many books, some about paper-folding, some about other things. But, usually, playful design.

JB: And Janet Marcus, who was the educator, who'd been the museum educator [since 1982] at that point, she had an amazing--I guess she must have had some grants, so that she was able to do

even more, especially with teachers, concerning the puzzles. I know she had a big teacher's [in-service training that focused on the puzzle show].

SE: You know, I wasn't in town for all of that, so I don't even know what she did. I can't remember what she did.

JB: Well I was wondering--yeah, because you didn't come back from New York to live in LA until--

SE: Eighty-eight.

JB: A couple of years later.

SE: And while I was living in New York, and working at the Hudson River Museum, we had the show there.

JB: Oh, I guess I had forgotten that.

SE: Yeah. And that had an interesting review there. Didn't make me happy at all. But anyway, that--I'll tell you about that later.

JB: Yeah. Well tell about the show, as it [was in Los Angeles].

SE: Well the show, each section--the sections were divided by the mechanism of the type of puzzle. So if it was sliding blocks; or these complex, put-together puzzles that were wooden puzzles usually, with interlocking pieces; or secret boxes; or ceramic jugs and drinking vessels that were trick vessels; you know, string puzzles; different kinds of puzzles--and they were categorized in these basic categories. And actually, I was really putting specific puzzles into categories. I worked a lot with Jerry and had some influence on [identifying the categories of some] puzzles we were working with, you know? He sometimes—well, sometimes they would fall into two categories. But sometimes, the primary mechanism to me was not the category he had it in, and so we would have discussions about that. And so that was kind of interesting, because even though I wasn't very good at working the puzzles, I understood them really well. And that was kind of fun.

JB: And then it traveled to Japan. I know Marcie, I guess, because you were in New York, Marcie sort of took over the organization of the packing--

SE: Well she was the Registrar, so she had to pack it up.

JB: Right, right. And Michelle Arens helped with that, too.

SE: Now in each category, we had these giant puzzles that you could play with.

JB: Oh, yes.

SE: Giant-sized puzzles that were--

JB: Interactive.

SE: Yeah, that the kids especially were interested in, and one of them, one was an interlocking puzzle that was a dog, and you could sit on it, once it was put together. And there were those bent nail puzzles that had handles [attached to the interlocking wires that had to be disentangled], and Jack designed all of those. And that was really fun. We had a maze. I still have copies of that maze that we printed on [large sheets of] newsprint, and you could rip it off [the pad], and then do it again, and--so anyway, that was really fun. And what else? . . . . It went to Japan, because Nobuyuki Yoshigahara was one of the lenders, but he also was a [famous] puzzle designer. And he coordinated with the department store gallery, Matsuya Ginza, . . . Anyway, he set it up and designed it, and he made a new sliding block puzzle. We had had a sliding block puzzle table—about 24" – 30" square. I think he redid all the puzzles, so we didn't have to ship them.

JB: Oh, the big interactive puzzles?

SE: The big ones, yeah, so we didn't have to ship them. And he didn't translate all the text, he didn't think that was important. [laughter] So--because there was a lot of it--but anyway, he--the sliding block puzzle **[2:10:00]** we had was . . . there was a dinosaur, and you were supposed to cage it by sliding the blocks around until they formed a cage. There were walls on some of the puzzle pieces. But it was like those "one to 19," or whatever they are, puzzles, where you slide the numbers around. It was the same idea as that, only instead of putting numbers in order, you were putting the dinosaur into a cage. Well, his deal, his sliding block puzzle little table, was put--you know, in Japan, they have those toilets that are in the ground, it's like--it's formal plumbing, and it has a ceramic rim and everything--but it's a squat toilet in the ground. That's--their public toilets are like that. . . . And they consider the kind we have dirty—[I was told] they're not [considered] sanitary. But anyway, he had a little toilet in the block, and you had to put it into the bathroom--basically, slide it into--until it [was enclosed]. And the kids thought it--I was just appalled, I was--I said, "Jerry, you can't let this happen." [laughter] I was just like--I can't believe this.

JB: No, but this was not in Los Angeles, it was just in Japan.

SE: No, this was in Japan. Yeah, in Tokyo. And I just couldn't believe it. [laughter]

JB: But probably the Japanese got it, you know? They probably--

SE: They thought it was funny. I thought it was gross. And they thought it was funny, because here you are sticking--you had to stick your finger in the toilet to move it around.

JB: Yeah, but that's a difference in the culture, I guess.

SE: Yeah, totally. Well, of course, then [in Tokyo] I was looking at billboards with naked ladies on them, and it was like--we didn't do that, either--yet. That was before Calvin Klein. [laughter] . . . . But anyway, Jerry calmed me down on it. . . . The other interesting thing about that [exhibition, when it was mounted] in Japan was that Marcie went, of course, and we were both there, and we

did a lot of traveling around together. And we went to the puzzle party. But it was interesting, because Marcie was older and we were both women, the department store men--they wouldn't talk to me; they only wanted to talk to Marcie. They didn't like my manner either. And we were given a woman who had lived in—had gone to Stanford, I think, and spoke English--she was our interpreter.

JB: A Japanese woman.

SE: Yeah. And anyway, it was interesting. Because I--because we were kind of joking about how she [the interpreter] and Nob [Nobuyuki Yoshigahara] were kind of Americanized, whereas the other guys were, like, obviously not. [laughter] And I don't know if she took--I don't think she took that very well actually. Nob loved it, but she didn't. [I learned a lot about interacting with people in an unfamiliar culture.]

JB: And given Edith's many trips to Japan, and her interest in Japan--but she never went to the puzzle show in Japan . . . .

SE: No, no. She didn't always want to travel, you know--just to go--because it was a big deal.

JB: Yeah, well she was older by that time--

SE: And somebody had to stay home and "watch the shop." [laughter] . . . . And then it went to New York [to the Hudson River Museum] when I was there . . . . After we got back to LA (and I was pregnant) it was in Vancouver at the Science Museum there, and it was also at the Toronto Science Center--

JB: Did you go to any of those venues?

SE: Yeah, I went to every one to set it up. In Indiana, it was at the Children's Museum in Indianapolis. I was [still] pregnant during that one too.

JB: Oh, I was going to mention Indiana, because a few years ago, I found out that Jerry had given his papers to the Lilly Library, the rare book library at IU in Bloomington.

SE: Right. That's your alma mater, right?

JB: It is. And I wrote to--I just emailed the woman--the archivist there, who was in charge of, you know, accessioning them into their collection, and I think I even sent her some copies of some things from our show, because she was very interested in that. I believe some of his puzzles were given to them, too.

SE: Yeah, I thought--I think there was quite a collection given to them.

JB: Yeah, yeah.

SE: And you know when we were in Indianapolis, they started a discussion about taking the collection at the Children's Museum, and why they didn't, I don't know.

JB: Well, they probably had no facility for receiving them at the Children's Museum.

SE: No, I don't think that's true at all; they had a huge collection--huge collection. It's a huge institution.

JB: You mean the objects themselves, yeah.

SE: Yeah.

JB: Well they went to the Lilly, which is-- **[2:15:00]** [a special collection facility, mostly papers, rare books, and archives].

SE: I mean they [the Children's Museum] have, you know, dolls and toys, and children's objects of many kinds. So I didn't--it seemed natural to go there, but they didn't--somehow it didn't work--they may not have wanted that many objects to deal with, it may have seemed like more trouble than they ultimately--you know, or he wanted more [from them]. I don't know. [Also, while some puzzles are designed for children, often they are more appropriaste for teens and adults.]

JB: Yeah, some--sometimes it's a mystery what--why things end up [in one place and not in another].

SE: Maybe they needed money and he didn't . . . have it.

JB: Well, the Lilly Library is one of the largest and most well-endowed rare books collections in the world, and so--because of Eli Lilly. [Colonel Eli Lilly founded Lilly Pharmaceuticals in Indianapolis in 1876.]

SE: Well, right. And [Jerry] collected a lot of books that had to do with puzzles. Old, old books. [Again, these often would be more interesting to adults.]

JB: Yes, yes. And I think those went there, too. Now--boy we're getting close to the time we've got to wind up, but I did want to mention that Mike served on the CAFAM board, now was that--do you remember just when that was, it was certain--

SE: Well it was after we'd got back to LA, after '88.

JB: Yes, yes.

SE: So maybe '89? Somebody we had recommended, that I had worked with at the Hudson River Museum was a development director [at CAFAM], Kim Litsey--

JB: Oh yes, Kim.

SE: --we recommended her to the museum, because she was wanting to move back out here. And she started working--it didn't work out that well. But--

JB: To say the least. [Joan actually got along with Kim very well, but she didn't work with her directly.]

SE: Yeah. I'm sorry about that, but while she was there, [Mike] was on the board, it was at that time.

JB: It was . . . [in the mid-nineties, just before the re-opening of the museum, after Sue Sirkus, the previous development officer, had resigned in January 1994.] In fact, I think he was still on the board when the museum closed temporarily [at the end of 1997], wasn't he?

SE: Possibly. I don't really remember the dates. He must have been on for two or three years, don't you think?

JB: Oh, I'm sure he was. I thought it--maybe it was longer than that.

SE: At some point, he just got--at some point, he thought he just wasn't interested enough in the process to stay on.

JB: Do you think they were--it seems to me that, you know, that was a time when fund-raising was an issue, and--

SE: It was very difficult.

JB: --and maybe they hoped that he would--

SE: No, he gave money. He was willing to give money. It wasn't that.

JB: But also, he knew Hollywood people, and they were trying to encourage [people like that to come on the board].

SE: Oh, that he would--oh, I don't know about that. . . . His connections to Hollywood were not with actors. Maybe some studio people. But, you know, he was never that high level that he could actually require people to--well he could do some--from his vendors, he could require them to contribute, people who'd made advertising for him. [One of the vendors Mike often hired set all the type for the puzzle show labels and text panels.] But he wasn't far enough up to like draw people in as much as they might have thought, or would have wanted. But you know, he was never really above the vice-president level. . . . If that was the case, I never was aware of it, if they expected more from him than he was able to give. But I think he pulled out on his [own]--he decided that you know, he just didn't want to sit in the discussions; they weren't interesting to him, and he couldn't do anything about them, or didn't know what to do about them.

JB: I believe you were back in LA; in fact, I think Sandro had been born when we moved to the May Company temporarily [in 1989].

SE: Yeah.

JB: I remember you coming to some of the meetings of the Center for the Study of Art and Culture.

SE: That's right. And I nursed Sandro in a meeting, and--

JB: Yes, I remember.

SE: --grossed out one of your committee members.

JB: Oh really? I wasn't aware of that. [laughter] But that was a period of upheaval I would say, we had had this, you know, huge plan, working with the developer, Wayne Ratkovich, to do what would have been a pioneering multi-use development, if it had come [about].

SE: Similar to what MoMA did—yeah, MoMA did later in New York.

JB: Yeah. Well actually--

SE: Or around the same time.

JB: [MoMA did it] just before that. And that was--Edith and Frank had been to the opening of the Museum of--

SE: Modern Art?

JB: No, the--I was going to say, Museum of Contemporary Craft **[2:20:00]**, but the name had changed by then to the American Craft Museum. Remember, they opened up that new facility using the [air rights to sell to MoMA]. At any rate, Edith and Frank really got the idea [for our building project] from MoMA, and from what the American Craft Museum had done. [That was in 1986. I was in New York and wrote a section of the catalog for the opening.] And that didn't work out partly because there was a big recession going on at that time, and they couldn't get the funding for the development, which really had nothing--it wasn't CAFAM's fault at all--that was the developer. So we temporarily moved into the May Company, and I was wondering what your thoughts were [about all that]. I know you were not on the staff at that time, although I believe you may have started to work on the show, Museum for a New Century; [opened May 10?, 1995].

SE: For a New Century. That opened in '95. What years were you in the May Company?

JB: Well, we were in the May Company from about '89 through [the end of 1992]. It was . . . [three] and a half years . . . . At any rate, I just was wondering what--as a sort of semi-insider/outsider--what your impressions were of the--of our situation there at the May Company?

SE: Well again, [like with Gallery 3 at Santa Monica Place], it was out of the way, nobody knew where it was. It was on the top floor--like behind the--I don't know what was up there.

JB: It was on the fourth floor; the [CAFAM] offices were on the fifth floor, but--

SE: --it was as high up as you were going to go shopping.

JB: Well, it was in the--what had been the furniture department. [laughter]

SE: Yeah. It was nicely designed. . . . Who did that, Lee Mullican, or?

JB: No, Joe Terrell.

SE: Joe Terrell, oh yeah. I loved the entryway, it was wonderful.

JB: Yes, that was amazing, that [was designed by Charles Moore's firm.]

SE: And there were some nice shows there. Marcie did one on Native American artists, and Beatrice Wood was there.

JB: I actually helped [Marcie to organize] the Native American [exhibition—in fact, it was my idea] . . . .

SE: I don't remember too much--I mean that was sort of when I was just coming back.

JB: I actually pushed for that show. [Native America: Reflecting Contemporary Realities; opened October 9, 1992.] It was--it almost didn't happen, and I was really determined that in 1992, which was the Quincentennial of—[it was 500 years since Columbus's coming to America] that we should have a Native American show of some kind.

SE: Instead of an Italian show? [laughter]

JB: Or whatever, yeah. And nobody got it, I mean at that time, it was still thought, even though we . . . . [mounted exhibitions about every] kind of cultural community, it was still assumed that the Museum of Natural History was the proper place for Native American art, even contemporary Native American [art, which is what our show was].

SE: Not even the Fowler?

JB: They didn't show very much Native American art at that time, it was mostly African art, Oceanic art, and so on. So anyway, yeah. Marcie and I worked on that show, and it was a pretty nice show. But yes, there certainly were problems with the May Company location, and it was too bad because in a lot of ways--besides the fact that it was free, it was--there were a lot of good things about that space in terms of our use of it. So--but then, abruptly--again because of the recession--the May Company closed. The May Company Corporation decided to close that store.

SE: I think Robinson's was buying them at that time . . . Or they were buying Robinson's.

JB: It was around--yeah, it was around that time. And so we had to get out, and we consequently moved into the corner building [at 5800 Wilshire], which then became part of the new--the new plan [that replaced the Ratkovich plan for the Museum Tower].

SE: Right.

JB: And that renovation that finally opened in 1995 [and incorporated both the 5800 and 5814 Wilshire buildings] was designed by Craig Hodgetts and Ming Fung.

SE: And [Joseph] Ventress owned that [5800 Wilshire] corner building, and he was on the board at that point, and the idea was that the museum would buy that corner building, and that would be the basis [for the Museum Tower].

JB: Exactly. In fact it would never have been renovated, if we had realized that **[2:25:00]** it--we could not buy it.

SE: Right.

JB: So I would like to talk just a little bit about this whole period when it seemed like the museum was expanding and expanding and expanding, and there were some setbacks, you know, from time to time--but basically, the momentum was to get bigger and bigger--and more of everything. Patrick had said--when we were planning the Museum Tower--he asked all of us to come up with ideas that would be appropriate for a much larger space. So, I was just, you know, again wondering--you did get involved sometime in the early '90s--in planning for this opening show, which was really a history of the Craft and Folk Art Museum, and was more than that, too. It was really about museums in general.

SE: Well, it was about museums that focused on craft work, or design, or folk art. It was what kinds of institutions had arisen, starting with--I don't know if it was in the Metropolitan Museum—or--

JB: The Newark Museum--I think--was one of the [first] ones.

SE: Yeah, there were several East Coast museums that had started early on to show industrial arts, basically. And the Met and the Newark were--

JB: Well—and MoMA--

SE: --and I had known about those things because I did this--when I was at the American Craft Museum, when we first got to New York, I did a project, just a six-month project doing a chronology of the history of American craft for a publication for their opening exhibition.

JB: It was a huge project.

SE: For their new building, yeah. And so I had researched you know, those kinds of--we started, I think, with the London international exhibition in 1881 [that sparked a lot of interest and activity in the U.S. And went on from there--so I knew that--I was familiar with the history of museums in the United States at that point. And so we--and then I figured out what, you know, the L.A. County Museum, which [had been the] science, history, and art [museum in Exposition Park], I'd looked into that, and, you know, other California museums, too, that were . . . dealing with similar materials, but in a different way. And then what happened, after the Craft and Folk Art Museum [had started] . . . , museums of singular ethnicities [were built]. And so it was just sort of a quick timeline of that, and then a timeline of exhibitions at the Craft and Folk Art [Museum, as well as] the Egg and the Eye [Gallery]. The Craft and Folk Art Museum [section] had little text panels, and it was pretty busy, but we [had] objects from different [CAFAM] exhibitions . . . as part of the timeline.

JB: Yes, and it was actually in two parts. Part of it--I don't think the whole exhibition--was changed over, but some of it was changed, and there was a second part to that show. It was in two parts.

SE: Yeah. What was that? Why did we do it that way?

JB: I'm trying to remember myself now, just what the difference was [between the two parts], but--

SE: Maybe we did more--maybe we didn't go all the way through. Maybe we stopped at a certain point, I don't know.

JB: But the part that was the history of . . . the Egg and the Eye gallery and the Craft and Folk Art Museum were very interesting too.

SE: Yeah. I was frustrated because I couldn't get many objects from the Egg and the Eye gallery that were in good condition. Edith kept no records, so we didn't know who bought things, and might have something. And we had this one photograph of a--this was also frustrating--of a Sam Maloof music stand that actually Edith had owned for a while. And she had given it back to Maloof to repair; it was at his studio. Frank and Nancy Romero decided to go out there for some reason, and I said, "Would you pick this up for me?" Because Frank had a truck. And they came back with this other horsy-looking one. [laughter]

JB: Oh.

SE: And it was--and I don't know, there was a cradle too--and I don't know if they wanted to bring that instead--that's what they wanted to bring, because it was bigger. And I said, "We can't have something bigger; the reason I chose this is because it would fit." You know, we didn't have a lot of space**. [2:30:00]** But anyway, we ended up with this horsy one that I didn't really like as opposed to this elegant one that Edith and Frank had owned, and was in the old photograph of the gallery. You know, it was too bad, but anyway, stuff like that happened a lot, and then we'd get a piece from an artist, and it would have been broken and repaired [badly]. [laughter]

JB: Well, it was really a memorable show for those that took the time to go through it, I—especially for those who had been associated with the museum for a long time, it was a--

SE: Yeah, it was more an in-crowd kind of show in a lot of ways . . . .

JB: Yeah. But people got really emotional. I remember there was some wonderful music that was played during the show, and--

SE: Well they played music from different slide sound presentations and films--

JB: Yeah, I put together the slide show . . . . I guess it was the sound that accompanied that. [Chana Smith helped to choose the music. There were three selections from an album called "A Week or Two in the Real World": Chinese Canon; Oleada by Juan Canizares; and Bayaty by Ashkhabad, Real World Records, 1994.]

SE: Yeah, you did.

JB: But I remember people, you know, kind of getting teary-eyed looking at some of those things. Well, that [the opening weekend], of course, was what we called the Homecoming [because] . . . we--we were actually closed from the time we left the May Company, which was I think at the end of '92, until--well it was at least two and a half years--reopening in . . . May . . . of '95. There

were . . . shows [at other venues during that time that CAFAM was closed], there was a show at the Patina Restaurant, there were shows at the gallery at the Pacific Design Center.

SE: Oh yeah.

JB: And I think . . . [that] even the Festival of Masks [was produced] at one point [during that time].

SE: Oh I think that--yeah, that happened.

JB: But none of these were necessarily activities that people would absolutely associate with the Craft and Folk Art Museum, unless they knew ahead of time that they were. . . . So, we were essentially dark for a long time, and so, when finally, we were going to reopen, it was a big deal for--certainly for the staff.

SE: Oh yeah.

JB: You remember the reopening with the tent [in the parking lot behind the two buildings].

SE: Oh yeah I do. Oh yeah, I definitely do. We had friends there who actually bought Sam Maloof's--there was an auctioning of objects that were the centerpieces on the tables, I remember, and some friends of ours bought the Sam Maloof candelabra.

JB: Oh, well, we had very high hopes at that point, and of course we didn't know everything that was going on behind the scenes until later. But the museum did go down very rapidly after that financially, and do you have any memories of that, either personally or maybe through what Mike knew--from being on the board?

SE: I was real involved with having--raising this kid, and doing fund-raisers at his school, these major fund-raisers that I worked on, all year long, practically, at the time, and I was also doing occasional projects for other museums, or other things. So-- **[phone rings] . . . .**

JB: OK. Yes, we haven't had time to talk about any of the other things that you were involved with.

SE: So I'm trying to think--I remember Suzanne Muchnic's article about [the closing]. ["L.A. Craft and Folk Art Museum to Close Down," *Los Angeles Times*, Saturday, December 6, 1997.] I remember being very disappointed that it wasn't working out. I remember the fund-raising was almost impossible. The NEA was not [well-funded] . . . anymore. The state council was—[California] Arts Council-- wasn't well-funded anymore. There was a lot of contention with Pieper, who was on the board at that [time].

JB: Oh Jim Pieper, that was the Guatemalan folk art [collector], yes.

SE: Mask collector, yeah. And he made allegations, and I think maybe there was some stuff that probably wasn't as on the up-and-up as we would have liked. And do you want to turn that off for a minute? **[2:35:00] [Break in recording.] . . . .** OK. The closing. I remember Suzanne

Muchnic wrote an article, and it was very unfavorable to Edith and Frank, in terms of their . . . [handling of the building, I think.]

JB: Oh really?

SE: Yeah, and I remember the--because Pieper was suggesting that, making allegations, because they wanted to take back ownership, maybe, of the [5814 Wilshire] building, or they wanted to reuse it. Noah was thinking about turning it into a theater. You know, there was some thought about doing that.

JB: Well, that was after it had actually closed, I think.

SE: Yeah, yeah. There was a lot of stuff that was very sad to me, very unhappy.

JB: Yes, yes. For all of us.

SE: Yeah. And I guess--I didn't--I went to openings and things, but I wasn't so terribly involved. I went--I was involved in the Italian Oral History Institute, and they did an exhibition, [Luisa Del Giudice], who ran the Italian Oral History Institute created it. She did an exhibition . . . during one of her festivals that she organized.

JB: But not at the Craft and Folk--

SE: Yeah, it was at the Craft and Folk Art Museum.

JB: Oh, do you remember what it was?

SE: Yeah, it was photographs from Alan Lomax, who was the musicologist.

JB: This must have been after the museum reopened.

SE: Well, Patrick was the [Interim] Director. Yeah, maybe it was.

JB: Yeah, because my--the list here actually only goes through the end of 1997, when the museum closed--

SE: Oh yeah, it would have been after that, way after that.

JB: --temporarily.

SE: Yeah, it would have been way after that. Anyway--so all right. So all I remember is being very sad. And not--I didn't love the exhibitions that were going on after the new reopening [after 1999], some of them I didn't think were wonderful.

JB: Did you get to know Peter Tokovsky at all, who was hired [after Joan de Bruin resigned]?

SE: A little bit, a little bit. . . . He didn't make eye contact. [laughter]

JB: He had some problems with--

SE: Yeah, interpersonal relationships.

JB: Interpersonal relationships. . . . But he was a folklorist, so--

SE: Right.

JB: Stella Krieger, who was the shop manager, actually was very involved with several shows that were put up.

SE: Yeah, she and her husband, [Fred Krieger, who was also on the board during that later period] put them together, yeah.

JB: A Mexican silver show in particular, I remember was--but yes, it was a very sad time; also, Edith was beginning to be seriously ill [around the time the museum closed at the end of 1997].

SE: Right.

JB: And then, of course, she--but before she passed away [in October 1998]--the museum was reopened, and that was in great part because of Patrick Ela's efforts.

SE: Yes, yes. When he went in and took it over, he really had to--he sort of always did it tongue in cheek--like I'm not really staying here, you know. I'm not really here, but let's get this going. [laughter]

JB: Well even before he was involved [again with the museum] directly, he talked to Al Nodal and got the city to--

SE: Right, to underwrite it.

JB: --to take it over, at first as an arm of the Cultural Affairs Department.

SE: Right.

JB: And that's what happened--that's how the museum was able to reopen. It was closed for, I think, 14 . . . months, totally closed. And we thought it was closed forever. The library was given to LACMA, and the archives were given to UCLA.

SE: Right. And the building almost [was] given to LACMA.

JB: The original building, yes. Yeah, we had lost the corner building totally by then. That's--that was the end of 1997 when that building [at 5800 Wilshire] had to be vacated. And so it was a sad time, and I guess you were around, and still very close friends with the Wyles and with Patrick.

SE: Yeah, I didn't see everybody as much as I had before, because I just was all involved in child rearing, and what--you know **[2:40:00]**--schools and whatever projects I was taking on. And I didn't see Edith as much as she wanted to see me, and I really should--wanted to see her, but I was--you know, I'm kind of a "whatever's-in-front-of-my-nose" kind of person. And so I felt badly

about that. When she got really sick, I didn't get to see her, she didn't want to see me then, not because she didn't like me . . . or was mad at me or anything, she just--it was difficult for her.

JB: Of course, of course.

SE: And I think I made her cry sometimes . . . . Because I would bring things up, and maybe I shouldn't have brought them up--

JB: Well, I'm sure that she was glad that the museum had reopened.

SE: Oh absolutely, yeah. . . . . Yeah. When she passed away, and I called my mother to tell her, she said, "Yes, I know, she was your second mom."

JB: A lot of people describe her that way. A lot of people.

SE: Yeah? And Nancy, at her funeral--or her memorial service--Nancy got up and talked about her, and I said, "You know, Nancy," when she was done, I said, "Nancy, it was amazing to hear you speak, because so much of it echoes the way I felt about her. And I know she's your real mother, but [laughter]--and I couldn't be as close to her as you were--but I did feel a lot of that same kind of sense of her."

JB: Yes.

SE: And importance from her. I wrote her a long note when I--when she told me she didn't want me to come to visit, towards the end. I wrote her a long note, and I felt--and I know that they read it to her.

JB: Oh good.

SE: I think--what was her other daughter's--

JB: That's--Diana.

SE: Diana read it to her—she told me that she had read it to her, and it was very important.

JB: That was probably when she cried.

SE: Well, yeah. That, too, but I mean before that, there were times when you know [we would talk about old times].

JB: Well Shan, I really hate to wind this up--except that we're both tired now--but it was an amazing organization, and you were such an integral part of it for such a long time. Really, even after you had left the staff, you were still very much thought of, and involved in a lot of ways. So, I really appreciate your taking the time to tell us these stories.

SE: Yeah, you're welcome. It's wonderful for me to do, actually. [laughter]

JB: Well it was a wonderful time.

SE: Yeah. It was, it was extraordinary, really extraordinary, for me to have thought that I would have ended up doing all those things I did in a public place, with--you know--where people came and saw things [that I had organized and curated and written about]. It was never the same as working at more visible institutions, but still, it was an incredible time.

JB: Well it was amazingly visible, considering the size of the institution.

SE: And the way it was put together--kind of with Scotch tape, you know--it wasn't really--it wasn't like --structured like other formal museums.

JB: Well, it was memorable, I think, for all of us.

SE: It was, yeah.

JB: Thank you very much.

SE: You're welcome!

[End of Session 2: 2:43:44]