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Erin Cooper, Denise Wallace
"Traditional Alu'utiq art forms in modern art"
Tape 1 and 2 of 2

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Side A)

04:30:27:04 - Interview with Mary Babic

QUESTIONER: Good afternoon.

MS. BABIC: Hi.

QUESTIONER: Would you tell me your name
and spell it for me, please?

MS. BABIC: Mary Babic. Mary, M-a-r-y,
Babic, B-a-b-i-c.

QUESTIONER: Okay. Where does -- where
does your family come from? Where do you originally --
where does your family originally come from, your mother
and father?

MS. BABIC: My mother, Sally Barnes, is
from Cordova, Alaska, and my father, Emil Hottenger (ph),
is from Germany.

QUESTIONER: I see. How far back -- when
did your family move to Alaska or from Germany? How did
they end up in Alaska?

MS. BABIC: Well, actually, we were
raised -- my family was raised in Seattle, Washington.
My mom and dad raised our family there and the kids, my
brothers and sisters, we moved back to Alaska. That's
where my mom was born and raised.

QUESTIONER: Oh, I see.

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1 MS. BABIC: So we moved back to her
2 hometown.

3 QUESTIONER: Uh-huh. What did you think
4 of your mom's hometown?

5 MS. BABIC: What do I think of Cordova?

6 QUESTIONER: Yes.

7 MS. BABIC: I love it. I've been there
8 since the early '80s and I'm raising my family there. I
9 like -- I like living in a small town.

10 QUESTIONER: What -- did your mom tell
11 you about Cordova before you moved there?

12 MS. BABIC: Act -- well, when we were
13 growing up, it was a place where we'd vacation. So, when
14 we grew up in Washington state, Cordova was a place that
15 we would come back and, you know, we'd visit Alaska, so I
16 always had a -- kind of a yearning in my heart to go
17 back. It was -- I enjoyed it every time I visited it
18 when I was a kid.

19 QUESTIONER: Could you kind of tell any
20 stories about maybe the family background?

21 MS. BABIC: I don't really know a lot
22 about my father's side. He left Germany when he was four
23 years old and moved to the United States. He doesn't
24 remember a lot. My mom's side, she -- I'm trying to
25 think of stories. She has stories to tell of early life

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1 in Cordova, living, raised in Cordova, but I can't think
2 of any.

3 QUESTIONER: Okay. So how did your
4 parents meet?

5 MS. BABIC: They met in Seattle. My dad
6 was in the services and they had a mutual friend that
7 introduced them, so they met there.

8 QUESTIONER: I see.

9 (Off record)

10 (On record)

11 04:33:44:00 - Interview with Herman Moonin

12 QUESTIONER:because we figured that
13 that was a subject that you know quite a bit about, so
14 we're going to talk to you about it, about your own
15 people and your own language. So that's why we set you
16 next to that map today. Are you ready, Mary?

17 MARY: Yes.

18 QUESTIONER: Okay. Herman, can you give
19 us your name and spell it for us?

20 MR. MOONIN: Yeah, my name is Herman
21 Moonin, H-e-r-m-a-n M-o-o-n-i-n.

22 QUESTIONER: And can you tell us where
23 you're from and what the name of your tribe is?

24 MR. MOONIN: Yeah, we're -- the map here
25 has Sukiuk (ph), the Alu'utiq (indiscernible). I'm

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1 originally from Port Graham, which is on the end of the
2 Kenai Peninsula.

3 QUESTIONER: And your ancestors, did --
4 were they also from that area or did they migrate to that
5 area?

6 MR. MOONIN: I think, from what I've
7 heard, I've never gotten the straight history from my
8 family themselves. I've heard that my dad's side of the
9 family is originally from California and my mother's side
10 I'm not real sure. I'm not sure where -- where she's
11 from. My grandma never did tell me anything about that.

12 QUESTIONER: Do you have any relatives
13 from the Kodiak or Cordova area that you know of?

14 MR. MOONIN: Not that I know of. Not
15 that I know. I'm sure there are some relatives there.

16 QUESTIONER: Whereabouts is the village
17 that you come from or the villages that you come from and
18 lived in?

19 MR. MOONIN: I live in Port Graham. It's
20 down here on the lower end of the Kenai Peninsula here.
21 It's 25 miles south of Homer and you get there by sea or
22 plane.

23 QUESTIONER: There's not a road system?

24 MR. MOONIN: No, there's no road system
25 there.

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1 QUESTIONER: What do you do for
2 subsistence?

3 04:35:50:06 - Subsistence Foods

4 MR. MOONIN: Oh, we got a good run of
5 silvers in the fall and for reds we go down to our
6 neighbors in Nanwalek and get the reds from there. We've
7 got a good pink run in Port Graham, so there's plenty of
8 that. We get halibut and bottom fish outside the bay.

9 QUESTIONER: So fish are a mainstay of
10 your diet?

11 MR. MOONIN: Yes.

12 QUESTIONER: What about other kinds of
13 food sources?

14 MR. MOONIN: Oh, there's moose, but not
15 that abundant down that way, I don't think. I've never
16 really seen much of anything. There's a lot of bear, but
17 not much moose that I could see.

18 QUESTIONER: How about plants or other
19 kinds of marine life?

20 MR. MOONIN: Oh, in the winter, there's
21 good duck hunting in that area. There's different places
22 in the bay we could hunt ducks and there's.....

23 QUESTIONER: Marine mammals?

24 MR. MOONIN: Seals. They're a little
25 harder to get, but that's one of the mammals we go after.

1 Sea lion. There's a few around. I think the seal is the
2 most popular sea mammal that people eat and hunt down
3 there.

4 QUESTIONER: Okay. Let's see how she did
5 with this one.

6 (Off record)

7 (On record)

8 04:37:24:15 - Altana

9 WOMAN: Well, Altana, what do you think
10 about all this?

11 ALTANA: I feel so good about using what
12 I (indiscernible).

13 MAN: Because we live in Atkus (ph), 100
14 miles southwest of Anchorage, you know. I don't
15 know.....

16 (Off record)

17 (On record)

18 INSTRUCTOR:and you can work on
19 these -- just like the eggs, you can make these different
20 colors.

21 (Indiscernible conversation)

22 INSTRUCTOR: Those you're looking at
23 going off into space somehow and getting smaller and this
24 is -- if it's really close by you, everything kind of
25 stays the same. This line and the back line are the same

1 -- they have the same angle. This line, this line and
2 this line all have the exact same angle and they're all
3 exactly the same length. And this one should go -- so,
4 if you have a square, start with a square and it goes up
5 and down and taking this line out here -- and this one
6 should be exactly the same length and the same angle. So
7 should this one. Then this line -- this line in back
8 should be straight up and down and this one straight back
9 and forth and then this one should be straight up and
10 down.

11 MAN: You're supposed (indiscernible).

12 (Off record)

13 (On record)

14 04:38:53:00 - Water Colors

15 WOMAN: All of it?

16 INSTRUCTOR: All of it. Make it a light
17 color.

18 WOMAN: What about.....

19 INSTRUCTOR: Make it light. The whole
20 cube.

21 WOMAN: Are you supposed to still be able
22 to see our pencil lines?

23 INSTRUCTOR: Sure. Watercolor is
24 transparent, so you should be able to see through here.

25 WOMAN: Color one per box.

1 INSTRUCTOR: And shine. For everyone's
2 box, it's coming from the top. It's shining on top of
3 the box. And so what side of the box should be the
4 lightest?

5 WOMAN: The top.

6 INSTRUCTOR: The top. The top of the box
7 is that shade that you just put down. So that's going to
8 be your top of your box. You don't have to do anything
9 else to it. Now, before you do anything else to that
10 box, what has to happen to your watercolor?

11 WOMAN: It has to dry.

12 INSTRUCTOR: It has to dry. Excellent.
13 So, usually there's three different shades on here, so
14 we're going to say this is the lightest. One is the
15 lightest, two is the medium shade, three is the darkest.
16 And how are you going to get these shades?

17 WOMAN: You put more coats of it on.

18 INSTRUCTOR: Yeah, but what are you going
19 to mix with it to make it a shadow?

20 WOMAN: It's opposite.

21 INSTRUCTOR: It's opposite. So -- but,
22 remember, you're going to have a darkest color. So, what
23 I would do, I would take your lightest color, your light
24 color is used as your base color, and make your dark
25 color on this side and then mix a little water with it

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1 and make this color. So then you have three shades. So
2 you have your base color. It's red. You have a light
3 red box. The darkest side will have a little more red in
4 it and then a little bit -- and some green in it to make
5 it the darkest side of your box. To make it the medium
6 tone of your box, take the darkest tone and lighten it up
7 a little bit with water. So you've got -- this is the
8 color you've just put down.

9 MAN: And we don't have any green.

10 INSTRUCTOR: Okay. That's true, but this
11 is a great way to learn how to draw highly watercolor.

12 WOMAN: That looks like a cube.

13 WOMAN: Is she going to take a picture?

14 WOMAN: Okay. I won't. I don't want to
15 -- I don't want.....

16 (Off record)

17 (On record)

18 WOMAN: Mary.

19 WOMAN: I'm just getting your pan and
20 working.

21 WOMAN: Well, I'm not even serious.

22 INSTRUCTOR: And it's a toothless one.
23 The toothless one -- toothless skulls are a little bit
24 easier to drain. (Indiscernible conversation)

25 WOMAN: Are you videotaping that one

1 side?

2 INSTRUCTOR: One side and then we'll do
3 the next side, you know.

4 (Indiscernible conversation)

5 INSTRUCTOR: And there's four halves --
6 let's say you just shape it to put the whole face in and
7 part of the cheek was pink. How would you paint that?
8 Would you wait for the face to dry and put pink in?

9 WOMAN: No.

10 INSTRUCTOR: Or would you put pink in
11 when it was still wet?

12 WOMAN: Wet.

13 INSTRUCTOR: Yeah.

14 WOMAN: You would have lines in it.

15 04:42:12:09 - Lines

16 INSTRUCTOR: But if you want to put the
17 nose in, you wait till it's dry because that's a hard
18 edge there. So think of where lines are and where lines
19 -- where do lines exist and where do you want them? I
20 mean sometimes people put lines where they don't really
21 exist in nature when they're painting, but it looks fine
22 when they're done. It's just the way they chose to do
23 it. And some people make one large object with things
24 kind of flowing into each other with no lines. It's how
25 you choose.

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1 (Off record)

2 (On record)

3 INSTRUCTOR: Blue or red at its widest.
4 So a fake -- a fake color of any of these. Mix a fair
5 good amount.....

6 (Off record)

7 (On record)

8 04:42:43:00 - Mixing Colors

9 INSTRUCTOR:dollop and then the
10 paint will be gone. So mix it up so the pan is at least
11 half full. And then, in a separate pot, mix up a color
12 that you think would mix nicely with it, that you like
13 next to that color. So it's personal preference. So I'm
14 going to use yellow and a little bit of red. Yellow and
15 red look pretty nice next to each other. And this is an
16 exercise I'm going to explain a little bit in how colors
17 overlay. Why -- how do watercolors look when you put one
18 color on top of another? You might even want to
19 experiment with different brush sizes, too. So don't
20 feel like you're stuck with one brush size, but don't go
21 real small. Stay large. Okay. So once you have your
22 color -- does everybody have their colors mixed up?

23 WOMAN: Yes.

24 04:44:07:14 - Initial Brush Strokes

25 INSTRUCTOR: Okay. What we're going to

1 do is -- I want you to imagine that you have just been,
2 oh, in someone's garden or someplace where there's been a
3 lot of flowers and the petals have fallen all over the
4 ground. So you're going to put pieces -- you know,
5 you're going to put paint on your paper, kind of dabbing
6 it here and there all over the paper, as if -- not
7 covering. You want them to be sort of separate. See how
8 I've done that? Just all over the paper. So you're
9 taking it and your brush actually kind of makes it --
10 when you put your brush down on the paper, it will make a
11 sort of petal shape. So let me -- I'm going to do a
12 little bit here and then you can see. Just real loose.
13 All over the paper. Some of the things can touch. Some
14 of them should be separate. Okay. I'm halfway done.
15 So, it's like that. I don't want to get too crazy with
16 this because -- as far as waving it around because it's
17 going to drip.

18 WOMAN: Mine is just making a dot.

19 INSTRUCTOR: Oh, that's fine. Large, you
20 know. At least -- go ahead -- look up for a second. Try
21 to make it about this long, about that wide. Make it
22 fairly large. Don't make them small. Because what
23 you're going to do later is overlap other colors on top
24 of it and you want to be able to see it. If the pieces
25 of the paint areas are too small, then you're not going

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1 to be able to see that. So keep working down. There's
2 lots of brush sizes here. If you want to try some
3 different brush shapes and sizes, this is a perfect time
4 to do that.

5 04:45:57:29 - Adding Another Color

6 Okay. The next thing is in -- some people -- now,
7 who's still got wet blobs on their paper? I hope
8 everybody does. If you do, what you want to do next is
9 mix up another color, mix up red, I like red, and what
10 I'm going to do is dab it on the side of a few of my
11 blobs and see how it flows into it. Like that. Go ahead
12 and put red on some of them. Just checking it out. Go
13 ahead and put red on some of them and let it flow into
14 the color. So go ahead and just check it out. And if
15 you want to switch to a different color, you can do so,
16 but don't do it with every single one. Just do it with a
17 few. So if I want to go ahead and do a purple hue and
18 see how that works out. I'm going to do that as well.
19 It's okay. There's no -- no such thing as really messing
20 up on here. Why don't you just -- kind of be a little
21 more sparing. Now, when you're done with that and you've
22 gotten as much yellow on there and done a little bit or
23 as much of your base color on there as you wanted, then
24 what you want to do is get it dry. What we're going to
25 do next is dry it.

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1 WOMAN: Can you use a dryer?

2 04:47:26:11 - Drying

3 INSTRUCTOR: Yeah. So, before you go on,
4 one more step, we're going to dry this and then we'll
5 move to the next color and the next color you're going to
6 find is going to overlay some of the color that you have
7 underneath. You're going to do the same shape, the same
8 pattern, until you get something that you want to stop
9 with. But what I want you to do is notice what the
10 colors do when you overlap them. And it will be a nice
11 test sheet for any time you do watercolor and you want
12 something to happen and you're not sure what color you
13 want over another color. You'll be able to look at it
14 and see it.

15 (Indiscernible - blow dryer)

16 INSTRUCTOR: So, before you put the blow
17 dryer on, what might be a good idea, which I haven't done
18 here, is to get a paint brush and kind of dab off your
19 extra water.

20 04:49:07:21 - Applying Overlays of Color

21 INSTRUCTOR: I'm going to try a different
22 size paint brush. A different size paint brush and mix
23 up my paint and then on this one you can still see the
24 lines, the dab that you had underneath and it will be a
25 different color just on pure white. What's cool is that

1 you can still see the lines of the dabs that you had
2 underneath, the colors you had underneath, and it will be
3 a different color in between the one that's just on pure
4 white. So do this a second time and you can see -- see
5 how this -- you can see the yellow on this underneath it.
6 That's the whole idea is that watercolor -- the reason
7 it's transparent is so you can get really neat effects by
8 overlying one wash with another wash and another wash.
9 So, once you've done that and you've dried it, then start
10 with another color. There's a blow dryer over there and
11 you can dry it, the sheet that you've got.

12 (Off record)

13 (On record)

14 (Indiscernible conversation - background noise)

15 04:50:51:00 - Carving

16 INSTRUCTOR: Where are you, Ryan? You're
17 waiting to saw? You need a saw. What are you going to
18 do? Did you carve it in already, guys?

19 MAN: Yeah.

20 INSTRUCTOR: You carved it in that? What
21 you do is you take the ink.....

22 MAN: Different stuff.

23 INSTRUCTOR:make a design there,
24 whatever you want to do. Then when you etch it, you
25 (indiscernible), you go over the area.....

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1 WOMAN: Hey, Jamin, are you still sitting
2 in there?

3 (Indiscernible conversation)

4 INSTRUCTOR: Fill in the areas where you
5 etched and then -- with the color. Whatever -- you know,
6 this can be different colors, but you need to remember to
7 rinse this little dish out really good. So you let it
8 dry for a little bit and then what you're going to do is
9 take some fingernail polish remover with acetone.....

10 (Indiscernible conversation)

11 INSTRUCTOR: Put a little bit in the lid.
12 Put some towel around here, just a piece of it. Just
13 take a little bit of the acetone and then, you know, you
14 might want to dot it off, but you can just wipe it out
15 like this. And then you can keep using a clean cloth so
16 you're not wiping the ink right back onto the piece. And
17 then you can take it and add more into it, you know, if
18 you want to add in -- oops -- more detail to get more
19 mountains in here. (Indiscernible) That's why it's
20 really important that you keep it -- get it polished as
21 well as you can because every little scratch shows up
22 when you put the ink in. So if you -- sometimes, even if
23 you mess up, you know, you can kind of wipe it out and it
24 will come out. You can use a toothpick, stick your
25 toothpick in here too, in the acetone, and use just the

1 toothpick to wipe it out.

2 WOMAN: These are great colors.

3 INSTRUCTOR: Yeah.

4 (Indiscernible conversation)

5 INSTRUCTOR: You know, if you want, you

6 can ink it in and see what it looks like. See what you

7 think.

8 WOMAN: (Indiscernible)

9 INSTRUCTOR: Yeah.

10 WOMAN: This is great. This is good.

11 (Indiscernible).

12 INSTRUCTOR: Yeah. That's just to put in

13 a lot of lines.....

14 (Off record)

15 (On record)

16 INSTRUCTOR: And your -- you know, this

17 is fine lines, but you can make them a little bit

18 heavier, go over and over them and stuff like that.

19 Here, are you going to use the colored ink? Mr. Morgan

20 has more there. So, anyway, if you want to take this

21 into the other room, if you have a nice quiet.....

22 (Indiscernible conversation)

23 (Off record)

24 (On record)

25 (Indiscernible conversation)

1 04:58:59:06 - Denise Wallace

2 MS. BABIC: I would like to introduce my
3 sister, Denise Wallace. Denise is a jeweler and she's up
4 here from Santa Fe and she uses a lot of semi-precious
5 stones (indiscernible) Alu'utiq ancestors and also Alaska
6 Native lifestyles and we're fortunate enough to have her
7 at the Cordova High School. She's working with two
8 classes there, the Eyak Institute and also the art class,
9 teaching them how to do some scrimshaw and ivory and some
10 silver work. And she has a presentation to show us and
11 I'll turn it over to her.

12 MS. WALLACE: Welcome. Thank you for
13 coming. As Mary was telling you, we're sisters. Our
14 mother grew up here in Cordova until she was about 14.
15 She was the eldest daughter of Xavier Barnes and so there
16 were about 14 kids in the family and she left when she
17 was about 14 to go to Wrangell and boarding school there.

18
19 We have several of our siblings that live here in
20 Cordova now and we have my sister Peggy McDaniel, my
21 sister Teresa Cook, who is going to be married this
22 coming weekend to Warren Chappell, so she'll be Teresa
23 Chappell, and Victor (indiscernible).

24 My parents, my mother Sally and my father Steve,
25 raised us in Seattle. My mother moved to Seattle in the

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1 '40s and met my father, whose family immigrated to the
2 United States from Germany when he was about four years
3 old. So they raised us there in Seattle. And most of us
4 ended up moving back to Cordova. We've always felt that
5 -- I have and I'm sure all of my siblings have always
6 felt that Alaska was more of a home to us, especially the
7 Prince William Sound here, than Seattle is. It's kind of
8 a big city. So we're all much more -- feel much more
9 like this is our home, plus the fact that we come from
10 such a large family.

11 And our grandmother Asthenia (ph) was a storyteller
12 here and she raised many children and she also raised
13 many grandchildren and she raised other folks in this
14 town as well. And she was just a very dear person to all
15 of us and we (indiscernible) very fondly. So she was a
16 big part of my inspiration for wanting to really express
17 myself as a Native person in my work and it took me a
18 while to kind of come to that place. You know, it took
19 me a while to kind of accept that this is who I wanted to
20 tell people -- what I wanted to tell people about was my
21 -- my cultural heritage and mainly was because during my
22 formation years as a jeweler, as an artist, I was just
23 basically learning my techniques.

24 So I moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1977 to study
25 at the Institute of American Indian Arts, which is an

1 all-Native arts school and it still exists, although
2 they're having financial problems, but they're working at
3 staying afloat. They -- moving there and being a part of
4 that art (indiscernible) was very good for me and being
5 in a place where there were a lot of Native jewelers
6 taught me a lot about my techniques. So, after I
7 graduated from this school with my Associate of Fine Arts
8 degree, I stayed there and worked with my husband and we
9 have two children. So we are still living there,
10 although we're in the process of moving, but this is
11 where I'm at right now.

12 05:03:39:17 - Jewelry

13 MS. WALLACE: So, now, in the process of
14 making jewelry, I've had -- gained some recognition for
15 my work, which I'm very thankful for, and there are some
16 articles up here after the slide presentation that you're
17 welcome to come and take a look at in some of the
18 different magazines, Lapidary Journal, Indian Artists.
19 It's a fairly new magazine that features Native artists
20 from all over the world and they try to feature the
21 artist as opposed to just the artwork. And there's some
22 catalogues up here that several of you have that working
23 together by a gallery that we were showing at that did a
24 10-year retrospect of our work and you're welcome to take
25 a catalogue and I'll be glad to sign it for you if you'd

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1 like. And I have a couple -- some postcards up here too
2 that you're welcome to take, postcards. And then there's
3 a few more articles in this book here that you're welcome
4 to take home and take a look at.

5 05:04:53:06 - Slide Presentation

6 The slide presentation that I'm going to be giving
7 tonight, I'm going to kind of skip over my -- kind of my
8 introduction that I normally give people and that is kind
9 of an introduction into Alaska because a fair amount of
10 the people I normally show presentations to maybe visited
11 Alaska, maybe they haven't, so I kind of bring them into
12 the world of Alaska, which is the animals and the
13 lifestyle and show them what is a big inspiration for me
14 in the work that I represent. So I'm just going to kind
15 of start in right there and start showing you some of the
16 actual pieces that have influenced my work and you'll
17 see, you know, that -- the pieces that influenced it and
18 then the pieces themselves, so I'll go from there. I'm
19 just going to get a glass of water.

20 Before we get started, I just want to say a couple
21 thank-you's to the Village of Eyak for helping sponsor
22 this, my visit with the students. This is the second
23 year I've come up and worked with the students at the
24 high school and I really enjoy it. I think the students
25 are great and it's a lot of fun to work with these kids.

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1 And Mr. Morgan at the school has been very kind to open
2 up his work space for us and anything that you need he's
3 there and helping, so he's just been really kind to both
4 Mary and I in this work that we're doing, so I'd like to
5 thank Mr. Morgan and the school for allowing me to come
6 in and work with his kids. We're also working with the
7 Felzen class, which is an alternative program for the
8 high schoolers, so they come to the classes and it's been
9 really great, they're wonderful kids. So I think that's
10 (indiscernible).

11 (Indiscernible conversation)

12 MS. WALLACE: Oh, that's much better.
13 This is an older Yupik mask that's called the Woman in
14 the Moon Mask that Interior people and Athapaskan also
15 use this mask in their work and I always thought she kind
16 of reminded me of my Grandma Asthenia because of her
17 (indiscernible) and everything. So this is a piece that
18 I designed and (indiscernible) designed.

19 WOMAN: Do you want a chair?

20 MS. WALLACE: No, I'm fine. Am I in your
21 way though?

22 WOMAN: The video.

23 MS. WALLACE: The video? Oh. And the
24 pieces -- if you want to ask me questions as I'm going
25 along, please do so. I sometimes forget to give you

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1 information.

2 MAN: Is that silver?

3 MS. WALLACE: Yeah, it's made out of
4 sterling silver and then we use fossilized walrus tusk
5 that comes from St. Lawrence Island, so it's all --
6 almost all of it is walrus tusk and it's anywhere from a
7 hundred to thousands of years old. This particular
8 piece, the face is latched in and can come out and be
9 worn separately as a pendant, then you'll get to see as
10 we go along some of the other pieces (indiscernible).

11 This is a photograph of the walrus men. This shows
12 the men wearing the -- northern Eskimo men wearing the
13 brets (ph) and the idea of looking like walrus and the
14 idea of transformation. So here's another piece -- these
15 are all pieces that I'm trying to show you that influence
16 the work and how, when I look at other people's work,
17 they'll see other -- things of the past, how they come
18 through and how I translate it into my work.

19 This is a piece done by a friend of mine, Bill
20 Perkopioff (ph), who is originally from the Pribilofs,
21 and he lives in Santa Fe. He's been there for longer
22 than I have. Almost 40 years. But this is all welded
23 steel, so he's got the dancers, the walrus men dancing.
24 And here's a series of pieces that we did with the walrus
25 transformation, being the man up in the left-hand corner

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1 is wearing a walrus mask, the piece on the right top he's
2 actually transforming into the walrus, and you'll see a
3 lot of ivory carvings, you know, done by carvers from up
4 north where they have that transformation scene. And
5 then the piece down below where it's a half human/half
6 animal face.

7 WOMAN: What size are those?

8 MS. WALLACE: Those are about -- the mask
9 on the bottom is probably about 3-1/2 inches by maybe 2.
10 And all of these can be worn as pins. That's what they
11 were designed as. Here's that walrus mask transformation
12 piece and here it is taken out. And then I do this cut-
13 out work underneath that shows that transformation
14 happening in the metal.

15 Mike Tiskin (ph) and I have been working together
16 for over 20 years and he does all the laboratory work for
17 the pieces, so we've been a working team for all these
18 years. We started home schooling our kids about three
19 years ago and have been teaching them (indiscernible).

20 Here's another piece of Bill's with the walrus mask
21 on, welded steel with (indiscernible) and here's one of
22 ours. This one's about -- this was a series of pieces
23 that was featured on the census poster, which some of you
24 may have seen. Mary has a copy of it and I think Peggy
25 does. These pieces were only about two inches high, so

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1 when they did the poster, I was kind of a little taken
2 aback to see the pieces so large. I immediately saw brow
3 marks. I thought, hmm.

4 This is a picture showing the women fishing. This
5 is a series of pieces that I worked on -- I worked on a
6 lot of hunting pieces for a while showing the
7 (indiscernible), so I kind of thought I better do
8 something that the women do, so these are photographs of
9 the women working, hanging fish up and braiding the fish
10 together. And these are the series of pieces that came
11 out of that. A lot of times the theme of belts comes
12 from a bigger theme and the belts into the small series
13 of scenes. So these would have been on the
14 (indiscernible). These ones were hanging fish and here's
15 a close-up of one. A lot of the pieces have hinges on
16 them that are (indiscernible). These are basket makers.
17 So these were all part of the belt and they can all be
18 detached and worn separately.

19 Here's an older box with a seal designs and then the
20 face in the center is show -- is the spirit of the
21 animal. Here's some more transformation pieces in the
22 sea otters with like a human face and showing a skeletal
23 design. Here's a series that we did from those showing,
24 once again, the face and the center of the body is the
25 spirit of the animal.

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1 This is a belt piece, three-piece belt, and then the
2 center piece comes out. Here's a seal mask. Here it is
3 again. All of the pieces are under four inches, so this
4 one is probably about 3-1/2 again. This is a picture of
5 the dancers, which most of you are familiar with. And
6 this is a whole series of the King Island dancers. This
7 is the belt that was featured on that poster and it was
8 also displayed at the Anchorage Museum. Here's a close-
9 up of them.

10 WOMAN: Does someone own that belt now?

11 MS. WALLACE: Yeah, that one is owned by
12 a private collector. Most of the belts are owned by a
13 private collector. They're in private collections. Just
14 one of the belts is owned by a museum. Here's a drummer.
15 This shows the drummer down on his knees, so that's why
16 he's kind of got those little stubs down there.

17 WOMAN: Is that fossilized ivory one
18 piece?

19 MS. WALLACE: Yes, it's all fossilized
20 ivory and it's just textured to make it look like fur.
21 And here's some of the dance gloves that some of the
22 Inupiat dancers wear. And here it shows on this King
23 Island dancer. He's got those gloves on the
24 (indiscernible). His little mask opens up and he has an
25 ivory face underneath. Here's another one of the mask

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1 designs. I did a whole series of masks that became a
2 belt. And here it is. When they make these masks, the
3 doors open up and they have ivory faces underneath and
4 some of them have little pendants inside.

5 WOMAN: Are most of those detachable
6 (indiscernible).

7 MS. WALLACE: All can be detached. This
8 shows some of the engravings on some of the old ivory
9 pieces of the transformation stories, the killer whale
10 transformation. Here are the dancers etched into the
11 ivory. In a lot of my -- I look at everything when I'm
12 designing pieces. I look at the smallest etchings to the
13 larger masks to -- you know, when I come up here and see
14 the sea otters floating. There's a lot of things that
15 influence what I do and I try to do as much research as I
16 can when I work on pieces.

17 This is a whole series of pieces that were
18 influenced by that whole idea of transformation of Yusip
19 (ph) masks to transform into an animal to gain that extra
20 knowledge needed for hunting and survival.

21 So, one side would be the dancer with a mask on of a
22 particular animal and the next piece will actually be
23 transforming into that animal. Here's the bear
24 transformation. Here he is transforming into the animal.

25 This is a series of pieces I did after seeing the

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1 Crossroads of the Continents exhibition that was featured
2 at the Anchorage Museum. It traveled -- it started in
3 Washington, D.C. as an exhibition put together by the
4 Smithsonian as well as several museums in Russia and they
5 brought together pieces from Siberia to Alaska. For
6 those of you who haven't seen the exhibition, it was
7 really an elaborate exhibit, mostly of garments that were
8 done in the mid-1800's. So these are Siberian pieces
9 here. It's showing the connection between Alaska and
10 Russia before the Cold War, so it was trying -- it was
11 showing similarities as well as the differences between
12 our cultures and how we influenced each other.

13 This was from the Evan tribe in Siberia. This is
14 the Aleut from the Aleutian Islands with the seal gut
15 parka. This type of design of coat was actually
16 influenced by the Russians by their big case
17 (indiscernible) and then the Aleut hat.

18 This was an Evan figure also. This was -- belonged
19 to a man (indiscernible). His name was Igor Shamanoff
20 (ph) and that's where the name shaman came from because
21 he was a medicine man.

22 This is a northern Eskimo and this is a Koriak (ph)
23 figure from Siberia. But I was really impressed and
24 influenced by the detail that the woman put into the
25 garments and how much was put into people's clothing. So

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1 when I went over the exhibit, after thinking about it for
2 a while, I really wanted to do a piece that showed this
3 kind of work, only, you know, translated into jewelry and
4 metal and stone and ivory.

5 The was the Tlingit figure with a walrus blanket and
6 woven hat. And the Athapaskan. The work on the top is
7 done with quills. Before they had beads, they took
8 quills and wrapped it with moose hair and caribou hair.

9 This is one of the really beautiful garments from
10 Kodiak Island. It's done with (indiscernible) skins. So
11 it's probably at least 100 neck skins on this parka with
12 tufts of white fur and puffin beaks hanging from it, but
13 it's really beautiful. They call him the Snowflake
14 (indiscernible). This piece here is made with fish skin.
15 It's dyed, bleached fish skin and then it was stenciled
16 on with patterns that would be passed down from
17 generation to generation.

18 So I started sketching my figures. Most of the
19 figures are about four inches high. Here is the Aleut
20 figure and then here is my sketch. I usually start out
21 with real loose sketches and then I kind of refine them
22 as I go along. Here's the Shamanoff man and there's my
23 sketches. Here I am working.

24 Here's the Igor Shamanoff starting to come to life.
25 The Koriak (ph) figure. Here it is turning into the

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1 gown. So those pieces on the top would overlay onto the
2 base there and they (indiscernible). It's very
3 complicated once you get going and there are many, many
4 pieces involved in one of the figures.

5 This is my husband taking the patterns and marking
6 them and cutting them for the different stones. These
7 usually -- what we do is we do the bezeling, which is all
8 the outside work and then from that bezeling he'll take
9 the -- will mark patterns onto cardboard and you can see
10 in this figure here and that becomes his patterns for the
11 stone and the ivory so each piece is done in -- well, you
12 know, custom done for the piece. Here he is cutting the
13 patterns out and these are all the various stones that he
14 inlays into them.

15 Here's some of the pieces that have all been
16 finished and scrimshawed on. We use quite a bit of color
17 base on this one, which we're working with the students
18 this year as well. The Evan one and the drawn and there
19 it's starting to develop into the piece. Here are all
20 the figures as they're going along.

21 We have to be really good about keeping track of
22 everything when you have that many parts being put
23 together. There's a lot of gold overlay on these pieces
24 and doors and hinges and engraving. Here's some of the
25 scrimshaw work being done. The scrimshaw is just etching

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1 on the ivory and then filling in those areas with inks.
2 Here's the finished pieces.

3 This is that figure I showed you earlier with the
4 fish skin and there she is (indiscernible) with a fish
5 inside of her. This is the Koriak figure. And then open
6 up those (indiscernible). I can't remember which figure
7 this is. It's one of the Siberian figures. This is the
8 Igor Shamanoff. His garment was real particular.
9 Everything had meanings to it with lots of symbolism and
10 there he is (indiscernible).

11 WOMAN: What does it symbolize
12 (indiscernible)?

13 05:28:25:00 - Story of Symbols

14 MS. WALLACE: That is a story and it has
15 to do with the shaman who overcomes the bad spirit. He's
16 the good spirit and he overcomes the bad spirit. So
17 that's him actually standing up on the top of the bad
18 spirit there (indiscernible).

19 MAN: What is on his face?

20 MS. WALLACE: Those are tassels that he
21 has on his headdress and it's sort of a protector so
22 people can't see his face. Here's the whole belt. This
23 belt took us about 2,500 hours to work on. Other than my
24 husband and myself, we had about three other people
25 working with us on the piece. And since we've been

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1 making jewelry, at various times we've had different
2 people working with us. At one time, we had eight people
3 working on the jewelry with us and we sold the jewelry
4 all across the country, but now it's just -- it's back to
5 my husband and myself and a married couple that still
6 work with us and then our children work with us as well.

7 MAN: Are those belts just decorative or
8 are they symbolic?

9 MS. WALLACE: The theme of putting
10 together belts like that came from the Southwestern
11 concha belt and I don't know if you're familiar with
12 concha belts, but.....

13 MAN: I've heard of them, yeah.

14 MS. WALLACE:they're usually just
15 silver plates. Concha -- concha means shell in Spanish
16 and so it was really influenced by the Spanish and then
17 the Native people in the southwest region started
18 developing their own style of concha belt and.....

19 Start Videotape Number 2

20over the years it's kind of just developed more and
21 more. People do more and more things. Usually they're
22 on a leather strap, but these belts here all integrate
23 the belt. As far as -- that's where the influence as far
24 as doing these pieces in a belt, but what it has done for
25 me is it has allowed me to do a series of pieces and

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1 interlock them together and most of them -- some people
2 wear them and some people don't when they're bought.

3 (End of Side A)

4 Side B

5 MS. WALLACE: So that's the end of my
6 slides. Sorry. I know that some of you were down
7 getting shots.

8 WOMAN: There were so many people down
9 there.

10 MS. WALLACE: Yeah, that's what I heard.
11 The catalogues have quite a few pictures of belts that
12 are not in the slides. This catalogue has pieces that go
13 back to 1987. So that the belts go back to 1986. Bubba
14 has one of these pieces. The sea otter, which has become
15 -- was very popular and we only did a limited amount, so
16 we don't make these anymore. The edition has been sold
17 out for a few years now, but the face lifts open and
18 inside is a human face because our stories tell that the
19 sea otter was actually human at one time.

20 WOMAN: How many of those were made?

21 MS. WALLACE: I think there was an
22 edition of either 100 or 200. I can't remember. But,
23 anyway, so there's a human face underneath and then she
24 has a little baby on her stomach, so she's a female sea
25 otter and the baby has a female face as well.

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1 WOMAN: Do you -- do you work on
2 commission or somebody commissions you or do you say,
3 okay, I wish to make these designs and just sort of
4 create (indiscernible)?

5 MS. WALLACE: For the most, I just make
6 what I want to make and then people come in and buy it.
7 Over the years we developed a line of jewelry that was
8 rings and earrings because I had so many people that
9 wanted earrings or wanted a ring just like this other
10 one, so we developed a line of jewelry and that's when I
11 had all those people working for me. So then we would do
12 limited editions on this line of jewelry also, so maybe
13 we would only do 50 of these pieces or 100 of these.
14 We're still doing some of those pieces even though we
15 don't have all of those other people working with us, but
16 we only sell out of our shop in Santa Fe now. And the
17 shop that we have in Santa Fe, also we've, over the
18 years, have started showing work by other Native artists
19 (indiscernible) as well as into Siberia so that we would
20 share some of the work that is being done up here so
21 people can see where the influences come from and just
22 see the work that is being done by other Native artists.

23 WOMAN: (Indiscernible)?

24 MS. WALLACE: No, that's what I'd like to
25 is not have a retail shop because I feel so available

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1 there and I kind of need a little bit more privacy in my
2 work over the years. It's been 20 years in developing
3 it. So not only do I, you know, manage the shop and pick
4 out everything that's in it, but I also design all the
5 jewelry and make it. My daughter is in the back row
6 there. She's been helping -- if you'll just stand up,
7 Dawn. She's been helping over the years with running of
8 the business and she does a lot of the computer work and
9 the shipping. There's so much that, you know, you have
10 to do when you have a business, whether it's making
11 jewelry or, you know.

12 WOMAN: Selling food.

13 MS. WALLACE: Selling food. Whatever it
14 is you're selling, you have to run a business as well, so
15 there's a lot of stuff (indiscernible) that you have to
16 do to keep up on. Anyway, we'd like to kind of just take
17 a break and maybe just make jewelry.

18 MAN: Have fun.

19 MS. WALLACE: The fun stuff. Kind of go
20 back to the way it was before.

21 MAN: (Indiscernible) I was down in Santa
22 Fe (indiscernible).

23 MS. WALLACE: Well, I'm the only Alaska
24 shop in Santa Fe, so -- I mean there's been so many that
25 have come and gone, but we're the ones that have been

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1 there for as long as we have.

2 MAN: When I was there (indiscernible)

3 Santa Fe, there was a square in the middle of town.

4 MS. WALLACE: Right. In the plaza.

5 MAN: And they'd set up shop in the

6 square.

7 MS. WALLACE: Right. And I used to sell

8 down there when I was a student. Actually, my sister

9 Mary sold when I was -- when my children were babies, so

10 she came down to stay with me for a while and sold out of

11 (indiscernible).

12 MAN: Yeah, I (indiscernible).

13 MS. WALLACE: It is nice. It was about

14 75 degrees down there the other day. It's beautiful.

15 This is the perfect time down there.

16 MAN: (Indiscernible).

17 MS. WALLACE: Well, it gets -- we get

18 pretty nippy, too. We get a lot of snow. This time of

19 year in October is (indiscernible). So if you -- sorry

20 about everybody that came in at the last there. Mary

21 needs to get her kids down and get their shots, too.

22 (Indiscernible conversation)

23 (Clapping)

24 WOMAN: Were you taking pictures,

25 sweetie?

1 (Off record)
2 (On record)
3 (Indiscernible conversation - loud noise)
4 (Discussion in classroom)
5 (End of Side B)

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