

INTERVIEWEE: Jane Slater Marquis
INTERVIEWER: Mary Emma Harris
Lauren Bellard
LOCATION: Claremont, California
DATE: March 11, 2013
INTERVIEW NO.: 374
MEDIA: Digital
TRANSCRIPTION: Mary Emma Harris

**[BEGINNING OF VIDEO, SECTION 1. BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW.
BEGINNING OF TRANSCRIPTION.]**

JSM: Whether they use the paper plates on that tree or whether the paper plates were separate – but they made a huge tree out of white paper plates and white paper cups.

MEH: Wow.

JSM: Let's say you've got a plate and you cut it – make a cut there, and you put the other one in like this [DEMONSTRATES] and you build it up until you got this huge cactus. And the paper cups were the blossoms.

LB: And that was all just during one of the werklehre classes?

MEH: No. It was for a party.

LB: That was all during one class? Oh, that was for a party?

JSM: This was for a party.

LB: For a party. Okay.

JSM: It was thrown away the next day. Well, just like all these werklehre stuff. All that stuff was put in the garbage.

LB: Right.

MEH: Did you ever go to the dump in Asheville to get stuff for the Werklehre?

MEH: To the dump in Asheville. They used to do that from Blue Ridge.

JSM: Go where?

MEH: To the dump in Asheville?

JSM: Well, you know, nobody had a car. We didn't –

MEH: It was the war years. No gas during the war.

JSM: What?

MEH: No gas during the war

JSM: No gas. No car. No, but I remember. I remember that – I remember that. It was after lunch, and Sam couldn't bear – he had to take an Albers course. And we went through the garbage – as a matter of fact outside kitchen. And we got a banana stalk this big where the bananas were all gone but the stalk was left. And I can't remember what we put it with but it was a great success. And then put it in the garbage.

MEH: How do you remember Bill Reed? How do you remember Bill Reed as a person?

JSM: He was sweet. I mean, I didn't really know him. But, as I said, he would come back to visit for short periods of time. He was just so sweet. He was a lovely guy. And, of course, he came back and built the Quiet House. And was very close to Anni, of course. I think she really adored him.

MEH: I think he was very much like a surrogate son for her.

JSM: [NODS] Yes. Very much so.

MEH: What about – you told us the *matière* study in the living room – in the sunroom. Tell me how you came about making that.

JSM: The leaves.

MEH: The leaves.

JSM: Well, I just picked up the leaves in the mountains.

MEH: Of –

JSM: They're Aspen leaves. It was in the fall so they had turned this golden yellow. And that was in Utah, and I took them back to North Carolina in my messy studio and made that.

MEH: You were telling us about how you made the netting.

JSM: [LEANS FORWARD]

MEH: You were telling us about how you made the netting.

JSM: Then I don't know where I got that black netting, but it made nice holes if you put a cigarette to it without burning it all the way up. I wanted it to make a shadowy look.

LB: Were the other students doing leaf studies?

JSM: Oh, yes, for Albers. That was the one time Albers would show us what he did. They're pictures of his – there are two tulip – from a tulip tree. That's very nice. Well, I did other leaf studies that are now gone. I mean, that's the only one that survived.

MEH: There are some photographs of leaf studies, but they're mostly black and white. Albers had some photographs. He made some slides of leaf studies, including that one he did of the two tulip tree leaves.

JSM: Well, actually, he recorded a lot of stuff I think. That one – I think it's in one of those books – of the doily with the eggshells. That was his photograph.

MEH: Was it? Yes. They made –

JSM: I wasn't aware of it, but I think when he wanted to, he recorded stuff.

MEH: His little Leica camera was in his pocket all the time.

JSM: Oh.

MEH: I think that, you know, somewhere in the Albers Foundation, there are hundreds and hundreds of photographs.

JSM: Oh, really. You know, he also wrote hundreds and hundreds of letters.

MEH: To students? To –

JSM: I had a collection he wrote to me after I left Black Mountain. Fifteen letters. I gave them to the Albers Foundation. But then I heard -- he wrote – I think people – I don't know where he found the time from his painting, but he wrote a lot of letters to people. Unfortunately, his handwriting is this big [DEMONSTRATES TINY WITH FINGERS] but –

[END OF VIDEO SECTION 1. BEGINNING OF SECTION 2.]

LB: Quilting.

JSM: Oh, if you can call it quilting.

LB: Do you not call it quilts?

JSM: The minute I got that book about Gee's Bend – and I'd never done it before.

LB: Oh.

JSM: What it was really like – as a matter of fact, what it really was like was like making stained-glass without the torture. I mean, stained-glass physically is difficult. The cutting of the glass, the wrapping and so on. Physically it's hard work. Well, with a quilt you just take – I have all these fabrics and you go snip,

snip, snip. And if it doesn't work, you can just throw it away and go to the next one. It was like a dream – I can do stained-glass without stained-glass.

LB: Do you do all the sewing?

JSM: Yes, and I'm a bad sewer. I hate sewing. And so, and I must say I was usually so excited that I wasn't very careful. I wouldn't say my sewing was very good, but it survived.

MEH: Yes, it's beautiful. We haven't looked at the seams, but the effect is wonderful.

JSM: Well, I wanted it to be stretched very tight. I put it on a frame, and then I must admit the edges were like stapled. Not exactly well done.

[END OF VIDEO SECTION 2. END OF INTERVIEW. END OF TRANSCRIPTION.]