Kentucky Craft History and Education Association, Inc.

Interview with Arturo Sandoval

August 16, 2007

Interview conducted by Greg Willihnganz

WILLIHNGANZ: Hey, Arturo, I am a man who has known you only for the last half hour, except what I saw on the site, so maybe you could start by just telling me a little bit about yourself as an artist.

SANDOVAL: Right, well your questions indicated that I was…when did I become a craftsperson? But, that started like in 1969, right out of the Vietnam War. I'm a Vietnam Vet, went back to school, got my Masters in weaving. But, I began as a sculptor. In other words, taking the loom and using it as a tool, and doing all my work three-dimensionally. Then, I went on to Cranbrook Academy of Art, and got into that program, and I continued making three-dimensional sculptural forms. It wasn't until after I began teaching that I began to move or shift away…especially when I came to Kentucky…from 3D. In Kentucky, I was given the opportunity to go to the Frankfort Surplus Properties, and there I found a lot of films, and tapes, and paper, and battery cable, that was perfect for interlacing, hand weaving, like basket makers do. And that's when I became really involved in the craft of making my work transcend some…what would necessarily be just personal issues, to get more into what would be a predilection of working with eco-green issues, which they call now, with the recycled material. So at that time, the material in my work became the message…processing it into interlacing weaving patterns, and machine stitching it together with other kinds of materials to create art quilts. That became the early processes of what I am now exploring in my work. And it has continually shifted and grown in that manner periodically from 2D to installation work now.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, when you say installation work, maybe you could…

SANDOVAL: Meaning larger commissions. Installation works, like what is in the Singletary Center, my Millennium piece., a large 20 by 40 foot art quilt, with moving planetary elements, or commission work, that's like in London, Kentucky, the Sixth District Courthouse, a large woven metal piece replicating the Appalachian Mountains. And, and water and sky.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh, okay, I see. So it sounds like you've had a fair amount of recognition over the years, and awards, possibly?

SANDOVAL: Yes, very lucky since my very first, you might say art awards, came in St. Louis. Because I was teaching full time at the time at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, so I received merit awards and first place awards for the sculptures, but my first NEA, or national award, that happened in '73, when I was beginning to make this shift between 2D and 3D. Now, that idea…putting monumental wall hangings, using quilt motifs, quilt processes, and modulation, to make these very large installation pieces, and that grant that I got for the craftsman fellowship from the NEA in '73, provided me funding for that. That continued on in this…as time went on, I again, awards followed one way or another, always for the work. Merit awards, primarily…but that helped me to, you know, stay focused. And knowing that my peers, and that people out there in the field, were in essence saying, "What you are doing is okay," is you know…you always make art for yourself, but at the same time, it's nice to get recognition for it.

WILLIHNGANZ: How, uh…when did you start teaching?

SANDOVAL: I began teaching as a TA in 1965, but, full time as a full professor in the context of academia, in the academy, in 1971. Right out of Cranbrook, I began teaching at Southern Illinois in Carbondale. And from that summer position, which was a part time position, I took a full time position at the sister school in Edwardsville. Edwardsville is located fifteen miles northeast of St Louis. So, I began teaching '71…I came to Lexington, in the University of Kentucky in '74, so I've been at UK since then.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, what would you say the training contributed to your experiences? It sounds almost like you defined your own areas of interest. And, you know, I'm wondering how you came up with the ecological perspective.

SANDOVAL: Well, what's interesting, is that every artist begins with process and technique. And so, I graduated from Cal State Los Angeles in '64, got my MA in '69, but in those two periods of time I still had to learn process and technique. And so, from learning how to do print making, or sculpture, or painting, or textile design and textile printing, to weaving, I had to learn traditional methodologies. Those methodologies were freely exploited by me into new ways of content **[phone rings]**. Sorry, this may be important. ***[Sandoval answers phone]*** Hello… Hi Jerry…Right, well, I talked to Cindy Clay, or Vicky Clay in the provost office

[Break in recording]

[Recording re-started]

WILLIHNGANZ: Sometimes you have to pay the bills.

SANDOVAL: Right. But, where I was coming from is, that the process and techniques gave me the ability to free myself up to create my own content. And my content, as a young artist, was related to biological forms, related to the techniques on the loom, how to make something flat become three dimensional. But, when I came to UK the idea of recycling all this material was fascinating to me, because as I did my explorations with it—which were small pieces—I liked the way the surface was abstracted. It still looked like weaving, but it was something that hadn't been seen before. And so, I began to interlace these materials, and machine-sew braids and strips of these materials, to create a whole new kind of visual language of textile. I was interested in still being read as a textile, or what Jack Larson has termed "art fabrics". So that, instead of it looking like upholstery material or casement material or a blanket, it would look like something new and fresh and contemporary. And so, the "art fabric" paradigm began to be used in my own vocabulary.

WILLIHNGANZ: Really interesting stuff. Excuse me. I have to check one thing here just to make sure I'm okay. Yeah. I'm in good shape. Okay, um, tell me something else. What, as you've worked in this sort of creating your own space there, how much of your time have you actually been able to spend on your craft, and how much of your time have you spent teaching and doing things that aren't really related to the craft?

SANDOVAL: As a young artist, I was probably spending 70 percent on the research and about 40 percent on the teaching, and so that's like 110 percent. In other words, really, I was really doing more than I probably should have. And so, I had to cut back, and when cutting back, it became to be 60 percent teaching, and 40 percent for research, and 10 percent for public service. So that is, in essence, the kind of contract I now have with the university. But, in, regarding making art, you make art as you need to, as the mood is with you, and as you're processing it…all of these different approaches and time tables, the sewing, the gathering, the viewing, the putting together. All that takes time, and it's all done in different moments in an artist's life. You go to bed, you wake up, you see what you've created, and you reevaluate it. That's pretty much the way, I think, about myself as an artist now. I make things that are in process, I re-evaluate them. That re-evaluation is a critical analysis of what I've been doing. It guides me. I listen to the work. The work tells me, "Yes, this should happen," or, "No, that should happen." And you know, you use all the skills that you've been trained to use as an artist. You never really eliminate any of those skills, but as you become more self-critical of your work you have to really get down to the simplest, most communicative quality that occurs with your work. Because art is visual, and that visual quality, that communication to your audience, and to myself primarily, has to be there. I don't just put stuff together. I really have to think that it's going to say something, as I said, contemporary. And innovatively new, something that's never been seen before. I was trained that artists always try to move forward with ideas. If you look back, it may be to tap into tradition. That then, pushes you more forward with the new idea. That's how I was taught. And so, I don't give up process or tradition, I incorporate it. And when in incorporating it, it becomes my own type of visual language and I've been quoted, people have addressed my uniqueness, by saying he's made his own process, his own kind of statement, that hasn't before been created, and so I sometimes fit between craft shows, art shows. I enter both, I get in both, you know. I sometimes get rejected in both, but at the same time I know that I'm moving my own ideas forward. And, as I said earlier, I make my creations for myself primarily. I've been very fortunate to have the university as my patron. Because, getting a paycheck for teaching, and for doing research, has provided me funding. And then, UK gives me a studio with all the utilities paid for, and I've had that now for 34 years. So that's made a huge difference, having the university support me and back me in that manner for my research.

WILLIHNGANZ: Tell me about this piece behind you.

SANDOVAL: The piece behind me is a very interesting shift in my development as an artist. When I teach, I teach design processes, and one of them deals with abstraction, and I call the workshop "Representation to Abstraction". The images behind me occurred in a 1986 trip to New York City. I was in an exhibition in the American Craft Museum called "Poetry of the Physical", and it was a major international craft exhibit, and it tapped into all the different, you know, media that we consider craft material. During that time, I was on the Staton Island ferry, photographing Lady Liberty. Well, I threw the camera to a buddy of mine who was with me, and I said well lets change film, I think I'm out. He opened it, there was still film in it so he closed the camera back, so all these different colors occurred with the Lady Liberty, the World Trade Center. And

just the work, by different images, they were…she was fusing…she was melting, she was a hot coloration. And then, I found out that I could take these images right to the printer and say, well, forget the red in this color, make them all purple or make them all blue and purple, or green, or put more red in, and so they did that right there, as I was having my prints made, so the piece behind me is a color variation, more of the purple tones that I did. And that again, replicates Lady Liberty, and three images that I got of Lady Liberty that are then spliced together in an abstract way, to create this pattern. And the stacking of it, in essence began…becomes like a, a replication of a, you might say, pattern and textile. So it becomes warp-like, at the same time it reads as an abstract image of photography.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow, it's pretty interesting stuff. Let's talk a bit about your history with the Kentucky Guild.

SANDOVAL: Okay, my history began as I was researching in '77, when I became a member. And my work was very different than anybody else had seen in Kentucky, but then…and I had submitted these interlaced recycled pieces for my portfolio. Well, I got in, and then I began to just become an exhibiting member. The Guild at the time, you could go to the fairs and be a participating member through the fair, or you could become an exhibiting member. For me, the exhibiting was what I was about. And so, it became very important for me to make work, and show it wherever I could. So through the years, I've become more active. I've become an advisor, a member advisor, in the `90s. And then I became a board member as well, working on the exhibitions committee, working with the Standards committee, and working for the education committee, the outreach. After my board membership, I am now a board advisor for the membership in the organization.

WILLIHNGANZ: So, what has the Guild done for you? Why is it you've devoted the time you've devoted to it?

SANDOVAL: Well, the Guild to me is important to Kentucky, because it brings together artists of various, you know, representational skills and materials, and puts them together in an organization that allows the public to see the professional side of artists at work. Real live, producing artists. It's not just simply artists that are in museums, what I call all sometimes dead artists, but it's the living artists. And the Guild itself, brought together all these individuals, and it makes it much more important, and it sort of quantifies and qualifies the stature of these individuals as artists and craftsmen and professionals. So, the Guild has put my work out into the region through exhibitions, and it has also allowed me to submit students' names for mentoring. It's allowed me to encourage my students, that if they wanted to become professionals in the field, the Guild is a good way and good place to start. You need to start some place as an artist. The mentoring system of the Guild, the fact that they have these two fairs yearly, all that provides you know, opportunities for people as myself and for young artists. As I said, though I don't do the fairs myself because my work is too large, I do encourage people who make objects to you know, think about that aspect of the Guild. And again, the promotional aspects that come along with the Guild, as being Kentucky's premier craft organization, that hasn't hurt at all, for me as an artist. But, my real reason was that I wanted, as an academic, to be part of this organization, so that I could again help

students move out into the real world like, become members of a professional organization such as the Kentucky Guild of artists and craftsmen.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, in developing your art, what was the hardest thing you had to overcome?

SANDOVAL: I had to overcome how to hold it together, meaning the craft of it. You can always have an idea. But when you start to put things together, there's always some kind of mystery behind how art is made. You know, people look at art, and they don't think necessarily about process but they're curious about it. In my case, since I was working with recycled materials that hadn't been used before, I had to decide how to back them successfully so that the front side, the art side, could be held on a wall, without falling apart. So it's always been, the hardest part has always been, the materialness of putting the craft together so that the magic of the art statement can still somehow be in front of the viewer.

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm-hmm. Now uh, you've been in the Guild since—

SANDOVAL: `77

WILLIHNGANZ: …`77, pretty much continually, is that right?

SANDOVAL: Yes, mm-hmm.

WILLIHNGANZ: And you still go to the art fairs even though you don't display at them?

SANDOVAL: Right, I support them. I've bought objects over the years from members.

WILLIHNGANZ: Tell me a little about this mentoring program, because I hadn't heard about that before.

SANDOVAL: Well, the Guild, the Guild mentoring program was organized, at least when I was on the board, as an advisee. That program was to, a craftsperson would find somebody who was either in high school, or out of college, and they would take them under their wing. And they would bring them and invite them at the fair, and there would be a booth that would be for, for like the booth fee would be given to them free. And they would have the opportunity to experience the fair and the mentoring program meant that a more professional artist or craftsperson would then work with this individual to learn how to set up a tent, set up the design of their booth, would learn how to create works for their portfolio that were in a professional level. It all began in that context. And it, I have no idea if it's ongoing to this day, but I do read in the newsletters about mentoring opportunities, that are still occurring, so I believe it still is an active program. And I'm, I don't know why it hasn't been addressed.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay um, have you, uh well…I assume over the years you must have made a lot of friends and acquaintances and contacts through this, has that been beneficial to you in your growth?

SANDOVAL: Yes, the relationships between myself, and members of the organization, benefited me first by being close to really professional people who are making beautiful objects. That in itself the idea of, when talking about it at a casual event, over dinner or over drinks at a conference or at a fair. I mean there's something, there's something that's energetic at the word symbiosis, or a synergy occurs between two individuals discussing their work, or discussing art and craft, or discussing how the organization is moving forward, or what the needs of the organization are. But the, the friendships that have occurred, haven't been as wide and varied. They've been more selective, because you know, I work as a weaver. But at the same time, I have certain friends who have been on the board that are woodworkers, or they're papermakers, or glass blowers, or metal workers. The friendships being, you know…that's participating more actively in the organization. They've become more close. My relationship with these people, because of the fact that we work hard to keep the organization going, has really you know, stayed abreast of where I'd like it to be.

WILLIHNGANZ: What role do you feel that the Guild has played in fostering the growth of craft and artwork in Kentucky?

SANDOVAL: Well, the Guild itself has fostered a major role. In the early beginnings of the Guild, there was an art train, that was organized so that places which were not in major cities, in small communities, they would have the opportunity to spread the word that there's beautiful objects and craftsmen and professionals that are in the Commonwealth. And that, we would go on that art train and share that with students and schools in regions, as I said, where kids normally didn't have that opportunity to get out to a fair or to a museum. So, the art train was the very first thing that was part of the outreach, and for my purposes, the fairs still are part of that educational outreach. And, um, I get excited by the fact that, through the Guild opportunities, again as I mentioned in the mentoring program, they have opportunities also. And I've done this, go, just go to schools, grammar schools, high schools, where you present a program about your work and you talk about opportunities that these young kids could think about. Most kids will think about becoming a fireman, who knows, an Indian, a chief, but they don't usually consider becoming an artist or craftsperson, unless they have that opportunity to see objects that are made into art, the participation of these artists. And that to me, is something that is very important. And an important aspect of the educational outreach of the Guild, is to continue making sure that there are our members out there communicating and participating in grammar school, elementary school, middle school, and high school programs. And students can have another point of view about careers in the arts, and careers in life.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. Do you feel like the uh, historically speaking, the Guild has had a significant impact on the growth of arts in Kentucky as compared with other arts and crafts organizations?

SANDOVAL: Well, in essence, the Guild is the primary base, from which all these other organizations have sprouted. If the members of the Guild weren't around, when all these other organizations decided to become organizations, they would not have professionals to contact. It's because of the Guild, and its membership and its longevity, that all these other organizations could go out and make, uh make

communication with these professionals. Their organizations are…have a lot of members that are Guild members. And so, the Kentucky Arts Council, the Kentucky Craft Marketing Program, the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, all these places okay, started with members from the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, and the Louisville Guild of Craftsmen. These are the two basic membership organizations, from which these other organizations drew their first professional contacts and members. So it's, it's, you know…the Guild was the foundation which all these other memberships could grow from.

WILLIHNGANZ: Has there been any struggle for influence or support between different organizations within the…

SANDOVAL: I don't, I don't necessarily see a struggle, because I'm on, I've been on several boards, and I'm on the KMAC advisory board now. And while I was on the board of the Guild, as well as KMAC, it was growing as a young museum, and organization and foundation of Louisville, I found that I was trying to bring the two together—not to compete—but to support each other, you know in that context. So, one organization could take advantage of the experience another organization has accrued over the years. And so a new organization, like what's called at the time, Kentucky Art and Craft Foundation, that new organization called upon members of the Guild to help them get organized, to think about exhibition, to contact other artists, to think about workshops, how to get the outreach to the public more for their organization, and like I said, it's been supportive ***[phone ringing]*** is that you?

WILLIHNGANZ: It's not me.

SANDOVAL: Okay, it must be the house phone.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah it must be the house phone. Okay... Umm... How would you say, that at this point, at this point in their development—because obviously, like any organization, they have ups and downs—at this point in their development, how would you say they rate, relative to a rank, relative to other similar organizations?

SANDOVAL: I think the Guild, right now, needs to rethink its mission, and rethink the way its having its educational programming, because currently, we've gone through many different shifts in our presidency. And that's not a healthy thing. You need to have somebody who's going to go in there, be a strong leader, and then move the organization forward with that leadership. Right now we have, you know, lost directors, because they've just left or the funding hasn't been there. And so, we really need to, really rethink our mission. I hope that the Guild will continue to remain a non-profit organization. The Guild does well as a for-profit organization because of the fairs. It brings in enough funding. But the non-profit side, the educational side, which gives us that ranking as a non-profit, is really the only way that we can truly survive, and that is because the Guild has a grain of its membership. We need to now bring in the young members, people that don't have white hair and gray hair, like I do. That doesn't mean we still can't have members who are over fifty, you know, you know, planning to be members of the Guild. But we need to think about the future, because the future is our

survival. And, I think right now, the Guild is not in the best, you might say, light, when it comes to how it's being viewed by other organizations. They might see it as maybe not as well organized. They might see it as maybe, fallen to the wayside a bit. But I think it just takes strong leadership to put it back on its feet. There have been, as I said, many highs, and there have been many lows in the organization. But, at least it still is around. We have not you know, quit and called it, you know, over. The organization still needs, and I think it has a healthy membership, but it still needs however, strong leadership.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, I sort of agree with you, and it sounds like a good answer to my question, actually. What role do you believe the Guild should play in the future? Um, I sort of hear what you're saying I.. ***[unintelligible]*** I, you know, one of my questions is a little more fundamental than that. I think that it's because I don't really, I suppose, see myself as a crafts person. Although I've made furniture and various things, I do a fair amount of woodwork over the years. But, I guess what I wonder is, what exactly is the value of craftwork? What are we trying to perpetuate here? Is this for artistic expression? Is it for preserving our cultural heritage? Is it for getting kids off the computers? What are we really doing with craftwork?

SANDOVAL: Well you, you…the three areas that you're talking about, I think, have meaning. Before computers, personal computers at least, craftwork things or objects made by hand were very important for people who were in just nine to five jobs. Some way to help them relieve the stress of their job, to get in a situation where maybe they might take a workshop, and they might learn a skill, and they might go back home and be creative. One of the things that I think is very important to, to hold as a strong mission for the Guild, is to help people learn to appreciate or be creative. If you can appreciate creativity, then you have an opportunity to go out and purchase objects that other people have made. You have an understanding of the time and the value of those objects. Craft objects in themselves are, add beauty to life. They're objects that make the surroundings in one's life beautiful. An object in a museum, is a cultural reference and part of the history of what has occurred within a culture, and within a region. And I think that's one reason why the organization like KMAC became a museum—because they wanted to hold onto some of the cultural aspects of it. The Kentucky Art Association, or the Kentucky Arts Council, that group in Frankfort has not yet created a museum or a state museum that is going to house its arts and crafts. It has, or the organization, the cabinet for the governor, has made a history museum, which in essence documents parts of the Commonwealth's history as a culture, as a Commonwealth developing over the years, to its current contemporary stature as a state. But it hasn't taken into, or embraced yet, the idea that there should be a state museum for art and for its crafts objects. They leave that up, in essence, to the cities right now. Like I said, KMAC, or the SPEED Museum, which has a glass collection, that collects other objects that are made by craftsmen as myself. And so, there isn't, there isn't a movement currently to house an archive, what would be considered historically, what would be considered the best of these objects. We've had many people die in the organization, so their objects are not being made anymore. So, a lot of them belong to the New York, other states' museums, instead of right here in our own. And so, for me, it would be really important to have the, the Guild get like a…become a lobbyist for trying to get a state museum going, so that in essence, the reason for making objects

isn't just simply to make them. But to show that there is a history of aesthetics and beauty that transcends tradition, and transcends the regular economics of just work, and jobs and teaching. It transcends and adds beauty to the lives of everybody in the Commonwealth and I, I just think that it's very important that creativity, whether you're an auto mechanic or that you're a craftsman making beautiful wood furniture or weaving tapestries, creativity needs to be somehow recognized. And so that creative aspect of each individual, as I said earlier would be one as an appreciator, or they collect objects, or one as a maker, or they find time to make objects as either professional, or as a part time you might say, woodworker or craftsman.

WILLIHNGANZ: You know, uh, part of what I wonder is, I look at the state of the crafts uh, industry, and activity in Kentucky. I was struck by, and I mentioned in the earlier interviews, the similarities between the craft fairs that are now being held, and the farmers' markets that are being held. I mean, at one time crafts were what everybody did, because you needed a basket. So you wove yourself a basket, and that was it. And uh, similarly, you grew your food because you were hungry. Well, now we're in the age of mass production. So, we have all this mass produced food, and the food that is hand grown by individuals becomes almost an art form unto itself, and similarly, we're getting all this junk from China, which is functional and gets us through the day, but doesn't feed our soul much. And so we're getting the rise of art fairs and whatnot. But my concern is, I look at this and think about it, and I don't know if you share this concern at all on how it is, but I look at juried art fairs and I say to myself, is this a way of just giving us the very best so that we look at it, or is it just a way of excluding people who just aren't there. And, my concern is, when I go to an art fair, and I look at what other woodworkers do, it discourages me from doing artwork and woodwork, because I can't begin to compete with them. I look at this stuff and I think "Wow, this guy's incredible."

SANDOVAL: Yeah. Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: And, so, I just wonder what we're doing with all of the craft movement at this point.

SANDOVAL: Well, you know, it's real important, as I said, that creativity be reflected in everybody's job no matter what they're doing, whether they're, as I mentioned, an auto-mechanic is the term I used earlier, but anybody who is working, if we had a consciousness in our schools of letting kids know that as they're learning, they're learning to be creators, and to use what they're learning creatively in their lives, well then we would have less of a problem. Visual literacy is an element that is recently surfacing as an important di-, you know, paradigm, in academia right now. And visual literacy is pretty much where our culture has been moving toward through ads, advertising, the computer. Everybody sees things, and they become littered by the symbolic, the symbols, or the symbology that is coming out of this, this visual literacy. And so, if the crafts are to survive, they need to somehow get into that aspect of reorganizing their thought process about how they're going to market themselves. Anybody can make things, and we can all have fairs, and the fair is one form of market. But, through visual literacy, we need to embrace also the new technologies. And so, there's no soul being lost necessarily by goods coming from China, because they're

usually hand-made. What is being lost, is the economic, you know, impact that is, making contemporary American craftsmen and artists lose money, because the objects they make are in competition with this mass market production. But creativity, needs to somehow be addressed at an early age through the visual literacy that we are doing currently in, in our educations' paradigm. Because if people think that when they go to work and do something, if they're unhappy with it, it means they're not going to give it their all. And, creativity is the, you know…repairing an automobile is a creative act, you know. You're making a functional object work more, more you know, economically perhaps, with fuel gas savings. But I think, I think that um, the crafts need to just embrace the economy and the marketplace as it moves forward, because handmade objects are still valued. Whether they're made for a mass market or whether they're made for a smaller market, as you mentioned, farmers' market, or the, the craft fairs. People are never left out if they learn to appreciate, and I don't think a person, a person should be discouraged from continuing their craft, even though they may not compete with the highest level of performance that you find in the marketplace you know, through the American Craft Council.

WILLIHNGANZ: You know, a concern that a Les Pross brought up uh, which I was kind of interested by, he talks about a Ugandan city I believe it was where a, city, it's a little village really, uh where they made uh these very fancy well thought out, well designed sandals, which they stitched with golden thread and they make very ornate and very distinctive and uh they'd sell these to tourists who walked through until one day one guy came through and said these are terrific. I can sell these for you. Uh, I want you to make sandals for me. And they said well, how many do you need? And he said about 100,000. And then you get to the place where your success now precludes your being able to do it.

SANDOVAL: Mm-hmm…your ability…

WILLIHNGANZ: How can you make 100,000 hand made? They don't have that many hands, and couldn't teach them all to do it the right way, and those things.

SANDOVAL: Right. Right. Well, do you know a handmade craft object that is unique somehow, has to be different than what you can find on the market, or it shouldn't be able to be replicated as easily as you can find on the market. This is one of the reasons why I mentioned earlier, that I in my own work…push innovation, because I don't want, necessarily, to have my own work follow the mainstream tradition, history of art making, as much as it's moving forward into the future, creating a whole new mainstream and a whole new tradition. I think that the Chinese market, which is creating very wonderful traditional objects: rugs, baskets, silk scarves or whatever. You can tell the difference in those characters' characteristics of those objects, because they're replications of what trends are all about. And if you get into trends, then you know the whole marketplace has its purpose for that kind of quality and aesthetic, you know. But if you move into the uniqueness of one-of-a-kind objects, well then, that marketplace does all of a sudden become a little bit more exclusive, you know. Because, more people with more money, can spend on the higher priced or higher priced point object. The Chinese influence, or influx of their objects keeps the availability of beautiful craft objects easily for the poor and for the lower-middle class in our culture. In other words, people can go and buy

something that is functional, that is well made, but it may not necessarily be made in America, but it's affordable. Whereas, if that same basket or that same tapestry were made by somebody in our organization, the price point factor would be prohibitive for most people. But at the same time, the uniqueness factor is also gone from the marketplace, when you flood it with items from other cultures. So, flooding items from other cultures, as you mentioned the gold shoes from Uganda, well that's one thing. But I, I know that those villages cannot produce the output that the Chinese market can, because the Chinese market has more bodies, you see. I mean, here at one time, like our Churchill Weavers, that just folded, that organization membership was so important to how Kentucky was recognized outside of our borders. Now, that one national organization you know, is gone. You know, it's now a history you know, of the organization versus an actual active member in the organization. But I don't see, I don't see the flooding of the market as being problematic. I just see it as an opportunity for, as I mentioned, people who can't afford the higher price points, to still have nice objects for them to use in their home.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. What do you think crafts and artwork tell us about our history and our culture?

SANDOVAL: Well, traditional crafts and artwork tell us about what you just said, survival and the need for function, and the need for these objects to help maintain survival in, in the new America, that was first being founded by our ancestors. Now they tell us about the abilities of us to see beauty in the world, and to see it uniquely and differently. You take artists from our organization, and take a look at the different qualities of each woodworker, or each weaver, or each you know, papermaker, or each painter. You begin to see a personal form of expression that is very unique and, and can't be found anywhere else. And that, to me, is what makes any arts organization strong; it's the strength of the members work to be at the highest level of aesthetics and professionalism.

WILLIHNGANZ: Do you think the rise of juried art fairs has been beneficial to the growth of crafts and artwork?

SANDOVAL: Well, the rise of juried art fairs again, creates a whole different kind of market, you see. And so, when you think about the national scene through the American Craft Council, or through the Rosen Group, you know, that's very different than what you might necessarily think about for our own regional organization, like here in the southeast. Everything is good when it propagates, you know, creativity and objects made by hand. I think all that is good. It's a matter of, a matter of how it can be passed on to the youth in our culture. Here again, as I mentioned earlier, you know, these fairs hopefully will encourage young kids through schools that are being brought in to see the fair as a part of the educational outreach to maybe want to become a craftsman as they grow older. So it's important to me, to think about that aspect, that the rise of these fairs is helping to propagate and to put out into the general domain, beautiful objects that people can aspire to own or as I said, can aspire to create. I think it's good.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well good. Okay. Um, do you think more of these activities, craft, artistic activities should be brought into our school systems?

SANDOVAL: The school systems require, in essence, a different form of KERA development, the Kentucky Educational Reform Act, when that occurred in the `90s, that required that students start to learn culturally about other nations and other, other organizations, across the United States and across the world. So, bringing in craftspeople or artists to demonstrate how these objects or images are made, helps in that, you know, educational goal.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, umm.. What do you see as the future for arts and crafts work, what future would you like to see?

SANDOVAL: The future that I'd like to see—for this organization especially—is to continue it's mentoring program to bring in younger individuals who can continue making objects at the highest professional level. Nationally, the…all organizations of the crafts are being impacted as we talked about, about the influx of the Chinese market. Everybody is being affected by that. Handmade quilts, tapestries, I mean, the Chinese can produce it cheaply because there's many more of them to make it. So, as I said, you know, that in itself has a good and bad side to it. But, I think the importance of craft is a cultural thing, something that creates in essence, a, it gives people in a culture something to look forward to after they have in essence maybe had a hard day at work. Or, in other words, instead of becoming a couch potato in front of the TV, they have an opportunity maybe to paint or to write poetry or to make crafts. I…I think it's, it's very central for the future of this organization, and all craft organizations. That we keep our educational objectives strong, because without recruiting more young people, without showing them the value of being able to live off their creations, without giving that opportunity out there, um, the craft movement would probably just you know, die off. Because, as I said right now, the grain of the organization, is something we really need to look at and see how we can change that, you know. The baby boomers were sort of baby booming it right here in our own organization, and we need to rethink, I-I said, the mission, to how we can bring in more young blood.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. I think I've run out of questions, are there any more comments you would like to make?

SANDOVAL: Well, I do want to make a comment about how, since the NEA has removed individual artist grants from their programming, I mean, how they have begun to focus more on community arts activism. And, I think that our organization needs to reflect seriously on how we can become part of that community art activism. There are many more grants through the arts and humanities, for those skills of people bringing that you know, activity into the community. There are many people, as I said, who are bored, and so they need to find some form of activity, and so workshops, lectures, whatever we can do to promote the organization through becoming more active through these grants that are available through the NEA, or through the NEH, that's something that our organization needs to reflect on and seriously consider. Because there's a lot of funding out there to keep the organization strong in the Commonwealth, and I think that we should not let it bypass us. That's pretty much it then.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay.

SANDOVAL: Well, great.

WILLIHNGANZ: Thank you very much, sir. You have a great week.

SANDOVAL: Sure! I appreciate it very much.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh, I'm sorry.

SANDOVAL: Forgot about that.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, yeah, yeah, got you wired here.

SANDOVAL: Get that, out of here, there you go.

WILLIHNGANZ: You've got one more, in your pocket.

SANDOVAL: I forgot we did put that in there. Which pocket are you in, the big one okay, there you go.

WILLIHNGANZ: Very good, thank you.

SANDOVAL: Thank you, yeah I appreciate it, too. I'm just happy that we're, been able to do this, and hopefully the organization will move forward with all this activity that we're running from.

[End of recording.]