



INSIDE THE GALLERY PODCAST – SERIES 2 EPISODE 7 (Mid-SEPT 2020)

Transcript of interview:

SUSANNE BAYLY-YUKAWA

Tragedy and Inspiration: An Artist's Story

SUSANNE BAYLY-YUKAWA

Tim Stackpool:

In this edition of the podcast, the things that inspire us, the rising of the sun, the wind in the trees, and the tragedies that shape our world. Can we find hope and inspiration in the toughest of times?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

For me, I think the worst did happen, and I carried on breathing. In a way, it's a horrible thing, but eventually made me braver.

Tim Stackpool:

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa tells her remarkable story in this special edition of Inside the Gallery. I'm Tim Stackpool, thanks for downloading the podcast once again, and thanks to our sponsor, Pixel Perfect Prolab for their continued support. You can learn all about their services at pixelperfect.com.au. Their contribution goes towards the transcripts of each edition, which can be found at our website at www.insidethegallery.com.au.

Tim Stackpool:

We recorded the most popular podcast of the series in the previous edition, and I'm sure this edition will prove to be just as compelling. This is a year of challenges, no doubt about it. Getting through the day for some of us is victory enough. As we've heard in previous editions, some remarkable inspiration has been found in these longest of days. If you haven't heard of artist, Susanne Bayly-Yukawa, you'll be astonished at her story and her struggle that began in 1985. But harks back even further to a chance meeting in London in 1978.

Tim Stackpool:

It's a story of unconventional love, of cultural divides, of terrible circumstances too, and legal complexities and minefields, I guess, is a more appropriate way to describe that. I think in that regard, it is important for me to let you know that this edition of the podcast is concerned with the artist's inspiration. In doing so, does not intend to judge the actions of individuals or corporations as described in this discussion, but the material is included to convey the perspective and challenges as recognised and interpreted by the artist only.

Tim Stackpool:

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa is British born, generally residing in Japan for reasons that will become clear as we discuss her story. But, she is currently in the UK due to travel restrictions. She joins us via WhatsApp, and Susanne, I first want to talk about your style of art for anyone not familiar with your work. Then we'll unfold your story and lead into how you are influenced by such an incredible story reaching halfway around the world. Your art, as you pointed out yourself, can appear digitally created, but it is in fact all created by hand, right?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Basically, for me, it's almost a sacred expression. For me, the most natural expression, the most natural thing in the world is geometrical patterns and symmetrical art. For me, it feels like a lifeline. At the same time, it feels almost, it's ancient and futuristic. But in my form, it's always in line with a pattern, or breaking the rules of a pattern, if that makes sense, a contrast.

Tim Stackpool:

Are you using pen? Is that how you're putting it together? How are you adding the colors?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

I'm always experimenting, of course, but pencil, ink pens I adore. I try to break my own rules. But basically, I love ink pen, and I feel ink pen is my other arm.

Tim Stackpool:

If I were to describe your work, it's like, I don't want to say stained glass window-like, but you talked about geometric patterns. In a way, very structured. I just wonder whether the geometry represents a control that you wish you could have wrangled over the past 35 years or so? Do you think that's a fair assessment?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Actually, as a joke, I would say, yes.

Tim Stackpool:

Okay.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

No, because I joke with family and friends. I joke I say the perfect order in my work is not reflected in my life. But, sorry to say, in real terms, no. Because actually, going back in childhood, as soon as I picked up a pen, I did the same. Had a mother who was artistic but in a different way as a singer and dancer, but she thought I was... She had a small daughter who was obsessed and perhaps abnormal, because I was creating these patterns.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

For me, even at that very, very young age, it seemed the most natural form of expression in the world. It's evolved. While it does look like on the outside, oh, yes, it could be you reflect order in your creative work, because it's missing in your real life, that's not the case with me. I'm kind of reflecting... In some of the artworks, you'll see, everything is symmetrical, and then I break my own rules, and it's chaos and symmetrical. But it's actually reflecting what we all go through, our patterns, everyone. The 35 years has only served to give me the passage for the patterns to evolve.

Tim Stackpool:

If you flip through your work, you do get those surprises, where the pattern does become more chaotic. Then all of a sudden-

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes.

Tim Stackpool:

I might ask you a little bit down the track, whether any of that chaos happened, perhaps simultaneously or reflects back on certain periods in your experience. But now, let's go back and try and understand where all this inspiration for you has come from. In the late 1970s, you were a 21 year old ballet student in London, as you just alluded to.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes.

Tim Stackpool:

Was dance going to be your life?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes, and sorry, going back to when I first picked up the pencil, I don't know, three or four, I was also in the ballet class at the same time. It was always my divided passion. I couldn't choose between the two. But by the time I was 21, I was facing my own reality because you can be as I was devoted to both art forms, but at that time, I was beginning to accept that, whereas an artist can evolve and you're not reliant, for example, on the shape of your hand or the length of your fingers. But in ballet, of course, you can't change what you've been dishd out with at birth. So, you can't improve the instep, well you can to a degree, but you can lengthen your leg a little bit, but not that much.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Because I hadn't got into the Royal Ballet and I had gotten into other ballet schools, et cetera. But for me, it was, at 21 anyway, it was a crossroads for me, and I was almost deciding to go to Austria or Germany to join an opera ballet company, because there was scope for the natural born dancer who was not perhaps blessed with the best feet or something. I was at a crossroads, but as I said, I had two artistic passions and could never decide between the two because actually they both went together anyway, if that makes sense.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes, it's the artist conundrum. Sometimes a conflict that great athletes suffer as well. But coming back to you, it was the London restaurant in 1978, you met a man who was 28 years your senior and that's when your world changed. Who was he and how did you first connect?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Okay, so if ever a young lady had no plan to have a boyfriend, think romantically, think anything other than devoted to study of art, that was me. Then what I experienced when we met and this unbelievable chance encounter, we were from completely different paths. Destiny had brought us together for the first time, and it was just uncanny. I can't find words to convey that energy of that moment that stayed with me throughout the following eight years even. It was incredible because there was such an extraordinary instant, intense connection, chemistry between us. It was like if everyone can say, a spiritual compatibility born in that second.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

From that moment onwards, just this extraordinary realisation of our compatibility. From then on, I always say that I'm living proof that such a phenomenal connection can transcend everything.

Tim Stackpool:

Who was this person?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

That person was Akihisa Yukawa. One of his first words to me in a very beautiful British accent. It was a shock that he was a Japanese banker, he was obviously very handsome and charismatic. The first words he said to me, "Please call me, Aki."

Tim Stackpool:

Aki, obviously well educated, as you say, English accent came from Japan, but he held a fairly significant position in business in Japan, didn't he?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

When we met... Well, in fact, at that time when we met, Aki was the manager of Sumitomo Bank, London. It was his second time to be stationed in London, and before that evening where my life changed, he'd already been in London like two years. There's extraordinary background. He was known frankly as a powerful Sumitomo Bank executive.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes, and this bank is significant in Japan, for those who don't know. It's probably what, the second biggest Japanese bank if I'm right?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes, I should say that, yes. Sumitomo Bank at that time, and now, it was like, one of the top two, three in Japan then, and now it's one of the top five in the world. So, very, very powerful. There isn't one Japanese family that does not have a Sumitomo project or something. Powerful presence and hugely respected.

Tim Stackpool:

Now, at this time, he wasn't a single man, though, was he?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

No. Some weeks later, he explained to me that he had a legal wife and that... He was married, and his wife had had a terrible brain injury. Originally had an accident and basically was hospitalised.

Tim Stackpool:

A difficult situation and a conflicting situation for him. Pretty much had adult children already.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes. Aki explained to me that he had two amazing grown up sons who were pretty much similar age to me. But while on the surface, we seemed to be different worlds, years apart in age, and just very, very

different backgrounds. However, what I soon discovered was that Aki had a phenomenal passion for the arts. While he looked like by day, the exquisite, serious, successful banker, he was an unbelievably gifted pianist. But his personal belief that unfolded in those early weeks was that he believed there was no higher calling than to dedicate oneself to pursuit of your art.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

I guess he did discover that kindred spirit and that was the essence of our phenomenal connection across these boundaries of age and culture and indeed prejudice.

Tim Stackpool:

You fall pregnant with a child, Cassie, your first with Aki, but you're not married at the moment and you head to Japan. Your relationship may not have been widely known. How did the family react?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Aki's family, particularly his parents, not other members of his family, but his parents were not typically Japanese at all. I was quite astonished that he believed from the onset as the months passed, it was Aki that always believed from the onset that his parents, particularly his mother, would embrace our situation. You know what? That was the first blessing. The fact that he told his parents, and when the time came, very terrifying moment came when he introduced us, myself and the first daughter to them, they completely embraced us, they gave us their blessing, it was extraordinary.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

I remember one of the first questions, Aki's mother was Takako, and she became to be like my real mother. Takako asked me one question, which was like, it could have been make or break. She said to me, "Why did you leave the ballet, Susanne?" I didn't go into any details, like I've said earlier on about my cross roads, et cetera. I just said, I was terrified, but I said, "Because I love your son."

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

At that moment, Takako and I, it was like, we had a bond, because she said to me, "Susanne, thank you. Thank you for making Aki happy again."

Tim Stackpool:

I'll stand corrected and happy to be corrected, your relationship was not hidden from his family and nor I guess because of that was it seemed to be dishonorable or scandalous or anything like that within his circle of family and friends in Japan.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

No, and Aki was actually most worried about my mother in the UK. She gave him her blessing too. We were very lucky in that respect.

Tim Stackpool:

You had your first child with him and then went ahead, and you were pregnant with a second child with him, and then in 1985, Aki boarded a flight from Tokyo to Osaka and what happens then?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Aki covered, in his position, he was flying every week or at least every other week, and he covered Europe, Southeast Asia. He was also president of New York branch, and he made domestic flights, which was, especially Tokyo, Osaka. He did it at least every other week. You can imagine the amount of flying and travelling he did. It was absolutely out of character, very unusual for him to say... We all have off days and tired and don't want to do something. But he was very, very determined that that day, he did not want to go to Osaka.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

He woke up and the whole focus of the morning conversation was, "I don't want to fly today and I'm going to do my best to cancel it. There's a meeting I don't want to attend. I'll keep you posted." It was almost as if he... Those days no mobiles and okay, he had a direct line in his office but he was determined to stay in touch more than usual that day. That was the start of how it happened, That morning I went to Aiiku Byoin, which is the Aiiku Maternity Hospital for check up, and everything was fine.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

I came back. I looked ahead of me, he had returned home for lunch, carrying our favorite sushi. It was almost as if... I don't know, he was irritated by then, not with me, but the fact that he couldn't stay at home with me, but considering being a workaholic and it was highly, highly unusual. He had asked his secretary that morning, he said, at the very, very least, he wanted not to fly.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

It was okay to choose between if it was a domestic trip to either fly or take the Shinkansen bullet train for comfort. It was hugely important for him to take the Shinkansen if he really had to go. His secretary informed him that, "Apparently, sorry, Yukawa-san" she said that "the bullet train is full, but there's one seat at the six o'clock flight to Osaka", which he very, very reluctantly accepted.

Tim Stackpool:

This was Japan Airlines Flight 123 on that day?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes. The six o'clock flight was the Japan Airlines 123. He was booked on one seat, reluctantly. I can never forget that last embrace. It was probably about an hour later, we had a power cut in the apartment. It was very strange because if you have a power cut in your apartment, obviously you check the fuse box, or you check if it's affected the entire building. My kind neighbor, by coincidence had come to see me and I asked her is it in your apartment?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

We called Tokyo Denki, Tokyo electricity and there was no reason why I had no power. There was a promise of a technician to come, someone from Tokyo Denki to see what was wrong. It was during that wait. At around, I would say practically at 7:00 PM, the power came back. At that moment, Cassie was looking for her favorite children's TV program, but the TV program, in fact, all channels had been interrupted with breaking news of at first, there was an announcement saying that a Boeing plane had gone missing.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

I'm trying to reassure Cassie... Cassie at that time was four years old, bilingual, probably stronger Japanese, and very, very advanced for her age. She was probably understanding more than me at that moment and she was saying, "Mummy, there's a plane missing." She said, "Is it daddy's?" I, trying to reassure both her and myself, because I genuinely did not know at that time, I didn't know that a Boeing 747 actually operated on a domestic route. I thought it was only long haul. I thought I had grounds to reassure us both.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Then it was just extraordinary that Cassie was saying to me, she was obviously still worrying that could daddy be on that plane that was missing? I kept saying, "No, he's on..." There were many planes around that time. As the clock ticked, obviously, there was an anxiety creeping in, and then pretty, pretty soon, it was quite, I'd say, horrifically soon, after 7:00 that a passenger list appeared. At that point, you know that there was 524 passengers on that flight. When the passenger list appeared... Have to bear in mind that I was really not believing that Aki was on that plane, and his four year old little daughter, obviously already anxious, probably understanding more than me.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Then we sat on the floor. I put her on my knee and I said... We just fell silent watching the passenger list. This is so ingrained, page after page and each page, "Oh," I said, "Daddy's not there. It's okay. He's not on the bad plane. He's not the one in trouble." But each page went through, and it didn't click that "U" for "(Y)U-Kawa" if he was there, it would appear on the last page.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Then suddenly, it's like, last page, but then, it was, I can't find words, it's like I see it visually but the shock of that last page. It was in this layout, it was "Yukawa Akihisa, 56". It was like, oh... Cassie burst into tears. I couldn't breathe, I was like, paralyzed. It was at that moment, the phone started to ring. It was Takako first and then various others, but it was a paralyzing moment, because it was unbelievable. The neighbour came back to me, who had popped in previously, and she didn't even know that Aki was on that flight. She just sunk in the chair with astonishment.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

I never forget her kindness to how she saw me at the worst moment in my life. If ever one is shocked. The horrible thing for me was that, from that moment on, it's like... It's really hard to say in words, but I was actually, by that week, in my ninth month of pregnancy, and it was like... I've gone cold saying it now, because it's terrifying thinking that your shock and your grief could hurt your unborn. At the same time, you feel you can't catch your breath and breathe because you're too shocked. I didn't know how to breathe.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

The fear of the... One of Aki's last words to me, apart from saying, "I love you, I don't want to go and I'll see you tomorrow." He says, "Take care of our last creation." Those words were like, just given me a fraction of just breathe. All the power came back, and then the Tokyo Denki guy came and there was no known reason why we had that power cart, no known reason.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

The power had come back. It is coincidence. I'm not saying it's supernatural or anything, but it is uncanny that the power came back probably around the same moment at the point of impact of the crash. It was thereafter I was a different person, and our world was destroyed, and everything that he'd ever said to me, because it's like, yes, there was a huge age gap between us, but throughout eight years, which I blessed and so lucky for, that's my message. It's almost as if he'd prepared me and told me what to do, because inevitably, chances were, he'd die first having being much older than me. That's when it all kicked in trying to thereafter became my mission to keep alive his belief system.

Tim Stackpool:

It's not the end of the story. In fact, it's kind of the beginning of a huge struggle for you, and who was to be compensated? In particular, in this instance, by the bank, being Aki's employer while he took that business trip on that plane, you pretty much received nothing, even though you were the mother of his children.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

The bottom line is that when an important senior executive decision is made, and this is both then and today, everyone will follow and respect that decision, whether it's good or bad, because it's ingrained in Japanese society that if a senior decision is made, then it is more dishonorable, it's a bigger wrong, if you like, to disobey, even if the request, the instruction is actually wrong. If that makes sense?

Tim Stackpool:

This has to do with the instruction as to who wants to be compensated, even from the bank's perspective, Aki's employer?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yeah. I said... Well, it's actually worse than that, because Aki's body was found four days after the crash. Some were never found. His body was found on day four. Day four, it was the beginning of my totally destroyed world because until that moment, there was hope that he might... Well, you will always hope for survival. Day five, the very next day, which was Friday, and he was killed on Monday and his body was found on Thursday, day five, the chairman of Sumitomo Bank called in Aki's parents and his eldest son, and at that moment made a decision, not based on how Japan would have treated me or a similar situation, but it was based on that chairman's decision, how to remove me. When I say remove me and my children and our family identity, he made the decision that we were not bereaved.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

It's worse than not being married. It's like your whole world is ripped away, and then it's your whole identity ripped away. Even worse than that, it was Aki's belief and wishes destroyed. I should also say that until Aki lost his life, his wishes were powerfully respected, and that included our life together. My fight, yes, compensation was involved and is part of the picture, but the bigger issue was that his wishes, his belief system, his everything was destroyed with his life.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

My fight has been to obtain identity that shouldn't have been wiped away, and more than that, just as my right to be the person he loved, and who he left behind. Because actually at that time, I wasn't allowed to have a lawyer. I didn't even want to talk about facts and figures, I was still struggling to

breathe, everything was so rushed and forced upon me and decisions made and I was too ill to deal with it and-

Tim Stackpool:

And having a baby.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Day 10 after Diana was born, I was pushed into a lawyer's office to make a life decision. Then I went back in the hospital from my anxiety and stress. I went back to hospital not because of the birth but because of the shock. Then when I left the hospital sedated, the next day, I was forced to sign something that basically affected my daughter's forevermore, in terms of giving up their inheritance. But that was a separate issue, I should have been left to grieve and to... Once they knew that Diana was safely born and that... Everything was about following that initial request, senior request.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Poor Takako, and Aki's father, Kazuho. We loved each other dearly. I really mean that and I knew that they told me everything and were trying to protect me, but they were also forced. It doesn't matter how elite the family. Until Takako's death, how many years later, she always said to me, "I'm so sorry, Aki's Chairman made us do it." If it had gone to the court, our identity wouldn't have been removed. If one's looking at financial terms, yes, we would have been awarded equal settlement.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Within Japanese law, it sounds very, almost quirky, that while there is this huge prejudice against then cohabitation and children outside of marriage. However, within Japanese domestic law, we had ample proof to show that Aki was going to marry-

Tim Stackpool:

Given that was his intention, and given the governance within Japan at the time, you had every right to be included as one of the bereaved.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes, and you know what, at that time, I was powerless to fight back. All I had to do was stay alive for our children. There are two directions and in that case, for me, it was ending my life, which I could have easily done if I didn't have our children, his children, or going forward, being the best mother I could be and carry on breathing.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

That was my focus. I had no power. It took me many years. At that time, Takako was my emotional rock. I'd like to think that I was to her too, but it took me many years to understand what my rights were? I'm driven now, at this point in time, to still put things right because I don't want anyone to suffer in the way that I did.

Tim Stackpool:

Was there any level of, and it may not have been compensation, but did you receive payment... This is for the benefit of people who are listening so they understand how the story unfolds-

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Of course.

Tim Stackpool:

You received some payment, which was to go towards the education of the children.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Basically, after that terrible meeting, as I said on day five, where a senior decision was made about removing us as bereaved, dear Takako, she jumped, she wanted to sell one of the several houses that Aki would have inherited. The fact is, it has been reported, you look at various media articles, and it stated, I received a particular sum. But what is not known is the background of that sum.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

That sum that was given to me, based on the need for three of us to live, and in most part to provide private education there.

Tim Stackpool:

You took the kids back to the UK after this?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes. But the agreement that I signed, I discovered many things years later. There are various angles to this. But bear in mind, we were all consumed with grief, so impossible to think clearly. Aki's parents were instructed by the chairman of Sumitomo Bank to make that payment to us. But there are terrible conditions on the paper that I signed that told me what I could not do. But it is signed by Aki's parents. For the rest of their lives, as we carried on without Aki, particularly Takako would say, "I'm so sorry we did it because we had no choice."

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Again, I say outside of Japan, it's hard to understand that.

Tim Stackpool:

Oh, yes, it's a cultural obligation.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Exactly, it was a cultural obligation, and I consider that amount brought about a bigger curse to our family, because it actually said that you are not allowed to claim compensation from Japan Airlines or any of the Sumitomo Banks or affiliated companies. Moreover, your children not allowed to claim for the Japan Airlines Scholarship Fund that were set up for all the victims children.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

It basically said you are not allowed to say you are the family of Akihisa. That is why Takako and I cried because she couldn't reject it. She had to follow it. My role was that I loved her like my mother. She was Aki's mother, she was my world, and I couldn't hurt her.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

They were forced to give me that amount of money. On paper, it looks like the agreement is between Aki's parents and myself, but the reality is the control came only from the chairman.

Tim Stackpool:

One would say this is an assertion. Your assertion is that the bank put pressure on Aki's parents to form this agreement with you.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes, absolutely.

Tim Stackpool:

The assertion you're making regarding the pressure that the bank put on Aki's parents, is that disputed by them?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes, it's important for us to point out that the bank hold a position which is in contrast to your perspective.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes.

Tim Stackpool:

However, as I said in the introduction, this podcast is about getting your position and understand the inspiration that is behind your work. So, go on.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Sure. They still say I'm not the bereaved. I have got every proof of family identity.

Tim Stackpool:

Basically, an amount was given to Aki's parents by the bank, with whom he was under service with while he was flying and the plane went down. His parents received compensation from the bank, and then it was out of that compensation that they gave you a sum of money to assist in the education of the girls.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Well, not quite because the compensation which gave me 340,000 pounds, which was supposed to... That is out there on the public domain-

Tim Stackpool:

Yes, but that came through Aki's parents.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

That came Aki's parents, and they, Sumitomo, their position is that they paid the Yukawa family, - end of. We are not Yukawa family, they say, - end of. Today, I am trying to prove the violation because in any culture, I have got more proof of family identity than is required in a lifetime. But-

Tim Stackpool:

It's a very convoluted story, but up to this point in the story, you hadn't received any compensation from the bank nor the airline.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

I've received no compensation from Japan Airline or from the bank, and that included Sumitomo.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes. Now, difficult for you, I understand, reading a press release from Japan Airlines from 2001 ... difficult to read with you, but it says that JAL and Boeing paid compensation to Aki's legitimate family, is what it says. The amount is undisclosed, but according to usual practice, it took into account funeral expenses, condolence money and compensation based on the victim's earnings. Unknown to JAL and Boeing at the time, was the existence of Aki's lover. This is what it says in the press release, Ms. Susanne Bayly-

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Unbelievable.

Tim Stackpool:

... and their daughter, Cassie. She was pregnant with another daughter, born later, named Diana. Now, it also says that Boeing and JAL shared the compensation to all the next of kin of the JAL 123 victims. JAL, it says, did not know of Ms. Bayly and her daughter's until August 1995 when Miss Bayly visited JAL's London office in the UK. You were making inquiries there, it acknowledges, about education support for the children of accident victims.

Tim Stackpool:

Now, there's difficulties here for you, as I say talking about Aki's legitimate family, first of all. These, I think are very specifically chosen words. Then they go on to ask, as a formality, JAL required proof of identity for Diana, the eldest daughter, Cassie, had been acknowledged as Aki's child by Aki in his lifetime. You then had to get Diana's paternity confirmed by the British High Court in March 2000. Then it says in April 2000, JAL offered education support to you in response to your earlier request.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes.

Tim Stackpool:

Did you accept that?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Okay, reluctantly, yes. Reluctantly, yeah. But can I say that there is a very important reason why I reached out in '95, and not before, and this is a reason that is not understood outside of Japanese culture. Going back to the promise that Takako and Kazuho made to Sumitomo Bank that they would help me, and I wasn't allowed to make official compensation claim. Takako was like my mother. As you know, we had a very, very amazing relationship.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

In about 1995, three years before Takako's death, and around her 90th birthday, she was completely alert, sound mind, completely with it, extraordinary mind. She said to me, she knew that she didn't have so many more years to live because Kazuho had already passed away in '95, and then Takako was the new head of the family. She unbelievably gave me a different blessing. She said, for the first time, I was allowed to take destiny in my own hands, and she formally gave me permission to approach Japan Airlines, and the bank. That was a turning point.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

The question that's not answered is, really did Japan Airline know of our existence back in '85, or was it genuine that they didn't discover me until I suddenly came out in '94, '95?

Tim Stackpool:

Well, we can only go by the official press statements that they've made.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yeah. No, no. Sure. Of course. The extra financial commitment that came was when it was realised that Cassie and Diana had an extraordinary musical gift and there was an extra, obviously cost to nurture a special gift. People think it comes free, but it actually costs more. Takako was funding that. I had always said to her, the whole point, if out of a disaster, if lives have been taken unnaturally, it should be those responsible for the event who should pay. It shouldn't be a family deepened into further loss or complexity.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

With that belief, Takako had given me permission, and that's why Japan Airline suddenly heard from me. Initially, it was about the education fund that I was requesting, which was not a compensation issue, it was a separate issue for the victims' children, for all the children. Then this breakthrough was that when we obtained the declaration of parentage in the family division of the High Court, and that was in 2000. At that point, prior to that order being obtained, Japan Airline had said to me, "If the order is obtained, we will act accordingly and we will accept the evidence if you achieve it."

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

But the order in itself, I have to say was even rare in the UK, because the last order of that kind had been obtained, I think back in '74. There's only one or two, ours was the second one that had been obtained, how many years after the death of the father.

Tim Stackpool:

You had to get Aki's name put on the girl's birth certificates.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Well, there was a deeper challenge to that. I don't know if you're aware, but there is no legislation that accounts for the birth that took place outside of the UK. What should have happened in the year 2000, was that after the high court order was made then... Cassie's order was in place because Aki had made a statutory oath during his lifetime for Cassie. She was fine. But the difficulty was for Diana, and she was born in Tokyo. While we had the rare declaration of parentage, I didn't know and many officials, it was unknown then, because I suppose quite unusual, there was still no legislation to amend Diana's birth certificate, purely because she had been born outside the UK and it happens to children born of the Armed Forces outside of the UK.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

The media reported it's euphoric, it's amazing. "They have the declaration", but no one knew, no one dug deeper to realise that actually, poor Diana was still having an incomplete birth certificate, because there was no legislation. It took me another nine years to campaign, and it was basically in 2009 that the Secretary of State wavered the usual criteria, and instruction was sent from the Foreign Office to the British Consulate in Tokyo, and Diana was like reborn in 2009 at the age of 24, and father's details.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

By 2009, that was the passage of why I couldn't speak out and why it took... There was no shorter way of doing it. It was extraordinary that a new birth certificate was issued. Aki was added, like we were added to his Japanese family register in 2011/12, he was added to family records in 2009, which was a euphoric moment in his memory. That was a first that had never happened before retrospectively.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

That is only like, one of the examples of the unique legal steps that were taken, and of the investigations I did, and the digging and the experts that helped me, and the senior government officials who helped me. Fast forward then, we get to a week before the tsunami hit in March 2011. The Japanese government approved my appeal to amend Aki's family registration in Japan, and that's never happened in history in the UK. It was constantly being told by the Foreign Office, oh, it's wonderful what you're doing. We respect what you're doing. But there's no legislation to fit your case. This must be only under Japanese law.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

I then go back to Japan, and then Japanese legal experts are saying, "We respect what you're doing, but you don't fit under Japanese law." In the end, the breakthrough achievement was achieved by applying both English and Japanese law.

Tim Stackpool:

I just want to interrupt the train of thought because people listening are probably concerned about the wellbeing of Cassie and Diana, but I should point out Cassie, she's a respected concert pianist. Diana has done very well, she's a violinist, I know. She's had recording deals. She's recorded albums. If there could be a rock star of the classic music world in Japan, then Diana is it. I just want to assure people that the children you have with Aki are doing well.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Yes. I was just going to say, doing well and also producing many grandchildren.

Tim Stackpool:

Very good. Where are you at now, and what do you still need to achieve now regarding this?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

The key issue is that, after all the accomplishments, and I, their mother, the person that Aki left behind who he loved, and I love, miss him as if it was yesterday. Thank you for highlighting the fact that I devoted all of, best part of the years to putting things right, putting my daughter's names on their family record. Now that's resolved, the bigger picture is when a big company signs up to for example, for the UN Global Compact because how can many powerful companies in the world gather together and promise to say that they behave correctly, they treat people correctly, basically follow all global principles in human rights and work practice. In reality, they don't, and there is no way, there is no method to hold those that abuse this or violate those principles, there's no way to hold them to account.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

While at the same time, they've made a public commitment to respect everybody's rights, to respect human rights in general. My key question, and what I'm fueled with today, and it's the passion behind much of my artwork as well, it is about truth, accountability, and transparency. Because at the end of the day, all of my struggles that has consumed 35 years has happened and has caused this suffering, because those fundamental, the fundamental beliefs have been ignored.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

It boils back to the same question, there was an article I had recently about my case, but how do you hold a corporate bank to account or indeed a government?

Tim Stackpool:

You're now, or you always have been an artist and activist at the same time?

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Thank you. Yes. I have to say that Aki was by most avid supporter. He absolutely, he believed in my art. Of course, he would. But, my whole purpose has been to maintain the belief system that we shared, and to fulfill the promises, and one of the promises, which was the one he loved most was that I would continue to develop and strike out a new dimension in my art. He is behind the core of that, and he is today. But each work I produce, it's not protest art at all, I don't want to ever say protest. But each work that I do, there is an energy, it's always attached to a belief and a power to achieve.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

For example, each artwork, one, I will link it to truth. Another... Obviously, many artists have produced work driven by living in a pandemic, but everything, there is an energy in it. Again, it's the energy that Aki gave me and that has stayed with me 35 years after his death, and I'd like to think that in each work, that there is that same energy. Because I'm still trying to achieve a better artistic expression. Every artist will want to improve and evolve and have the better way to express something. But, I think it's an evolving energy, and I think that... As I say, lovely feedback from particularly my dearest Japanese

friends and the private collectors who have collected my art because, while some will say we were on record as secret family, but what is still haunting me today is that I was actually a secret artist. Because my first solo exhibition that Aki was so enthusiastically planning before the disaster, obviously, that didn't happen, and I left Japan and then I followed a different path of almost invisibility. I have only exhibited my art in a very enclosed way and only to a select audience.

Tim Stackpool:

You had to encloak it in a way.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Absolutely. For every possible reason, and it's the messages that I'm giving in the expression of whether it's the precision of the geometrical pattern that I believe has a strength of its own and combined with a chaotic pattern. But the two together, that contrast together is representing a challenge that we all have. Then the final picture of how I see it finished, is that it's given the energy for us to get over it, if that makes sense.

Tim Stackpool:

Eventually, hopefully.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Eventually. Yes, absolutely.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. Well, you had an exhibition planned in Tokyo, prior to COVID taking hold on the world, and that got put on hold as well. Plenty of frustrations in your life continuing to... Plenty of victories, of course, and plenty to be grateful for as well. But your whole world though, your whole life has been shaped by these events. Do you look back on that and go, "Did I deserve this in my life? Should I have had a better life or would I have not wished for any other life?"

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

The latter. I immediately will say to that, that I still consider that I was extremely lucky. That's my take on it. I think that when you've experienced such a blessing in life... In a relationship, what more powerful thing, what greater treasure in life would we ever want, than two people who love each other? Nothing could be more powerful than that, and life's too good to be true. Even if that has unnaturally been cut short, it's still a blessing, and it's given me a lasting inspiration. The answer is, I'm still lucky. Yes, absolutely.

Tim Stackpool:

Again, even at this point, I don't want to say you're inspired by the troubles that you've been through, but one would prefer to be inspired by the sunrise or the sunset, or the green grass, or the blooming roses or something like that. I don't think there's any doubt that your art is tremendously influenced by the tenacious attitude that you've had over the years. To be honest, not to have given up is just remarkable.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Well, I sincerely thank you for that. But as I say, all that I'm doing and any strength that I've gained is thanks to Aki, and the inspiration he gave me and lives on. His predictions, he predicted long before his life was cut short, he predicted that our story would be important, and for different reasons, in a way no one would have known. He predicted the same with my new dimension of art expression.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

I feel an artwork is like a living thing. It's not about an ego trip, it's about your duty to platform it as best you can, if that makes sense.

Tim Stackpool:

I think it's not a great shame, but I think you almost have an obligation if you have the talent, you are obliged by society, by humanity, by the community to share that with everyone.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Absolutely. If one is lucky enough to transfer any of that energy that we all need, I think that it is a responsibility. In a way, I still say I'm lucky, but obviously I've had unique challenges, but it goes with the territory. It's like I said, when I came back to the UK, and it's like, I was in the deepest grief.

Tim Stackpool:

Susanne, thanks so much for sharing your art with us and your incredible story on Inside the Gallery.

Susanne Bayly-Yukawa:

Thank you so much for letting me tell you. Thank you.

Tim Stackpool:

That's Susanne-Bayly Yukawa, with what is easily a most remarkable insight, not only into the inspiration behind her art, but also an intensely candid discussion into her life. As you can imagine, there are significantly more details and perspectives to this story, and a quick Google search will return results including press statements from many of the other parties involved.

Tim Stackpool:

That is the podcast for now. Head to the website, at www.insidethegallery.com.au to download a transcript on this edition, always made possible by Pixel Perfect Prolab. There's also links at our website to our Facebook and Instagram pages as well as a link to sign up for our mailing list, which will only ever alert you to a newly published edition of this podcast. Let me assure you, you can unsubscribe at any time.

Tim Stackpool:

As always do what you can do at the moment to support the arts. Keep safe, and follow social distancing as locally advised. I'm Tim Stackpool, bye-bye for now.