



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with James S. Ackerman

Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
General.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	1
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with James S. Ackerman
Identifier:	AAA.ackerm91
Date:	1991 January 2
Creator:	Ackerman, James S., 1919-2016 (Interviewee) Brown, Robert F. (Interviewer)
Extent:	2 Items (sound cassettes (1 hr. 47 min.); analog.) 20 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with James S. Ackerman, 1991 January 2, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with James S. Ackerman, 1991 January 2, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This interview is part of the Archives of American Art Oral History Program, started in 1958 to document the history of the visual arts in the United States, primarily through interviews with artists, historians, dealers, critics and administrators.

Available Formats

Transcript is available on Archives of American Art's website.

Biographical / Historical

James Ackerman (1919-2016) was an art and architecture historian from Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Scope and Contents

An interview with James Ackerman conducted 1991 January 2, by Robert F. Brown, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

Ackerman talks about his childhood in San Francisco in a wealthy family of German-Jewish descent; travels with his family in Europe; early exposure to art and art history; education at the Cate School, California; education at Yale University, 1938-41, including recollections of teachers and curriculum, especially the

charismatic teaching of Henri Focillon; graduate work at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1941 and 1945-52, including curriculum and teachers such as Karl Lehmann, Richard Krautheimer, and Erwin Panofsky; World War II experience in signal intelligence; early publications and their fortunate effect on his career, and contrast of those who solely pursued facts and those who also have ideas.

General

Originally recorded on 2 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 3 digital wav files. Duration is 1 hrs., 47 min.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Focillon, Henri, 1881-1943
- Krautheimer, Richard, 1897-
- Lehmann, Karl, 1894-1960
- New York University. Institute of Fine Arts
- Panofsky, Erwin, 1892-1968

Occupations:

- Art historians -- Massachusetts -- Cambridge -- Interviews