



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Robert Adams

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Robert Adams
Identifier:	AAA.adams10
Date:	2010 July 20
Extent:	43 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	Adams, Robert, 1937- Jurovics, Toby, 1965-
Language:	English

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 the Archives of American Art's website.

Restrictions

Audio: ACCESS RESTRICTED; use requires written permission. Contact Archives Reference Services for information.

Restrictions

Use of the audio of this interview, with permission, requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives of American Art reading rooms.

Biographical / Historical

Robert Adams (1937-) is a photographer in Astoria, Oregon. Toby Jurovics (1965-) is curator of photography at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Robert Adams conducted 2010 July 20, by Toby Jurovics, for the Archives of American Art, at Adams' home, in Astoria, Oregon.

Scope and Contents

Robert Adams speaks of compensating his early struggles with polio with activity outdoors; his close relationship with his father through outdoor expeditions; visiting the Denver Art Museum as a teenager; years of study and experimentation with photography on his own and under the direction of Myron Wood; the financial struggle of transitioning from an English professor to a full-time photographer; the outcome of his work under the Guggenheim and MacArthur Foundation Fellowships; his first sale of photographs to the Museum of Modern Art; the role of spirituality and morality in art; environmental and societal concerns such as deforestation, climate change, and overpopulation that inform much of his work; the foreboding change in landscape he has observed in the American West since the 1970s; his concern that future generations of landscape photographers may not share the same connection with the land as he has experienced; the need to change society's domineering view of the wilderness; the working relationship he shares with his wife, Kerstin; the process of publishing his photographs and the importance of quality materials and printing in these publications; the sequence of the books he has published as a reflection of his life experiences. Adams also recalls Michael Hoffman, John Szarkowski, Myron Wood, Lewis Baltz, Leo Castelli, Beaumont Newhall, Emmet Gowin, Ansel Adams, Timothy O'Sullivan, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 3 memory cards. Reformatted in 2010 as 5 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 57 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Global environmental change
- Landscape photography
- Photographers -- Oregon -- Interviews
- Photography -- Study and teaching
- Poliomyelitis -- Patients -- Rehabilitation

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Adams, Ansel, 1902-1984
- Baltz, Lewis, 1945-2014

Castelli, Leo
Denver Art Museum
Gowin, Emmet, 1941-
Hoffman, Michael
John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Fellows in Photography
MacArthur Fellows Program
Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)
Newhall, Beaumont, 1908-1993
O'Sullivan, Timothy H., 1840-1882
Szarkowski, John
Wood, Myron