



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Dennis Adrian

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Dennis Adrian
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.adrian15
<b>Date:</b>	2015 October 8-9
<b>Extent:</b>	4 Items (Sound recording: 4 sound files (4 hr., 18 min.); digital, wav) 173 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Creator:</b>	Adrian, Dennis, 1937- Silverman, Lanny
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Dennis Adrian (1937- ) is an art critic, educator, and curator in Chicago, Illinois. Lanny Silverman (1947- ) is a curator at the Chicago Cultural Center in Chicago, Illinois.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview with Dennis Adrian conducted 2015 October 8-9, by Lanny Silverman, for the Archives of American Art's Chicago Art and Artists: Oral History Project, at Adrian's home in Seaside, Oregon.

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## Scope and Contents

Adrian speaks of growing up in Astoria; traveling to Chicago and New York; Cannon Beach; aging and getting older; his origins; curators and curating; visual sensibilities; the Portland Public Library; opera; his parents, grandparents, and family; Finnish sensibility and humor; Portland Art Museum and classes

for children; curator as voyeur; credit and accomplishments; hands on experiences; Artforum; art history; attending University of Chicago; homosexuality and coming out; looted European masterworks; Botticelli; exposure to real art; connoisseurship; collectors and collecting; a Robert Louis Stevenson letter; violin making; growing into yourself; Chicago; war; New York University; Frumkin Gallery; New York; the art world; Madison Art Center; Akron Art Museum; friendship and role models; Art Institute of Chicago; meeting Mies van der Rohe; meeting idols; education; Oscar Wilde and Dorothy Parker; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Monster Roster; traveling; Chicago art politics; writing and critics; Eurocentric curators; Chicago as an undervalued city; Dog Day Afternoon; discovering art; New York sightings; and experiences running into artists. Adrian also recalls Roger Brown, Ruth Horwich, Gilda Buchbinder, Don Baum, Sherman Lee, Victor Carlson, Peter Voukos, Lawrence Alloway, Rhona Hoffman, Allan Frumkin, June Leaf, Leon Golub, Jeremy Anderson, Robert Barnes, Tom Garver, Bruce Conner, Natasha Nicholson, H. C. Westermann, Franz Schulze, Bertha Harris Wiles, Muriel Newman, Aaron James Spire, Lillian Florsheim, John Maxon, Greg Knight, P.B. Maryan, Philip Pearlstein, Sylvia Sleigh, Nancy Spero, Irving Petlin, John Coplans, Alan Artner, Alice Shaddle, Phyllis Kind, Andy Warhol, Joseph Cornell, Tilda Swinton, Leo Castelli, Philip Guston, Dubuffet, Pussy Pepke, Bumpy Rogers, Barbara Rossi, Christina Ramberg, Philip Hanson, Miyoko Ito, Mark Jackson, Rolf Achilles, and Vito Acconci.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Art -- Collectors and collecting
- Art -- History
- Art -- Study and teaching
- Art thefts -- Europe
- Art, American -- Illinois -- Chicago
- Curators -- Illinois -- Chicago -- Interviews
- Educators -- Illinois -- Chicago -- Interviews
- Homosexuality

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Names:

- Acconci, Vito, 1940-
- Achilles, Rolf
- Akron Art Museum
- Alloway, Lawrence, 1926-1990
- Anderson, Jeremy, 1921-1982
- Art Institute of Chicago
- Artner, Alan G.
- Barnes, Robert, 1934-
- Baum, Don, 1922-
- Brown, Roger, 1941-1997
- Carlson, Victor I.
- Castelli, Leo
- Chicago Art and Artists: Oral History Project
- Chicago's Art-Related Archival Materials: A Terra Foundation Resource
- Conner, Bruce, 1933-2008

Coplans, John  
Cornell, Joseph  
Coronado, Francisco Vásquez de, 1510-1554  
Dubuffet  
Florsheim, Lillian H.  
Frumkin, Allan  
Garver, Thomas H.  
Golub, Leon, 1922-2004  
Guston, Philip, 1913-1980  
Hanson, Philip, 1943-  
Hoffman, Rhona, 1934-  
Ito, Miyoko, 1918-1983  
Kind, Phyllis, 1933-2018  
Leaf, June, 1929-  
Lee, Sherman E.  
Madison Art Center  
Maxon, John, 1916-  
Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 1886-1969  
Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago, Ill.)  
New York University  
Newman, Muriel Kallis Steinberg  
Nicholson, Natasha, 1945-  
Parker, Dorothy, 1893-1967  
Pearlstein, Philip, 1924-  
Petlin, Irving, 1934-2018  
Portland Art Museum (Or.)  
Ramberg, Christina  
Rossi, Barbara, 1940-  
Schulze, Franz, 1927-2019  
Sleigh, Sylvia  
Spero, Nancy, 1926-2009  
Swinton, Tilda  
University of Chicago -- Students  
Voukos, Peter, 1924-2002  
Warhol, Andy, 1928-1987  
Westermann, H. C. (Horace Clifford), 1922-  
Wilde, Oscar, 1854-1900  
Wiles, Bertha Harris, 1896-

Occupations:

Art critics -- Illinois -- Chicago -- Interviews