



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Adela Akers

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. 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.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Adela Akers
<b>Date:</b>	2008 March 4-6
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.akers08
<b>Creator:</b>	Akers, Adela, 1933- (Interviewee) Riedel, Mija, 1958- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
<b>Extent:</b>	113 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Adela Akers, 2008 March 4-6, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Adela Akers, 2008 March 4-6, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

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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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Adela Akers (1933- ) is a fiber artist from Guerneville, California. Mija Riedel (1958- ) is a curator and writer from San Francisco, California.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Adela Akers conducted 2008 March 4-6, by Mija Riedel, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at Akers' studio, in Guerneville, California.

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## Scope and Contents

Akers speaks of her California studio; moving from Spain to Cuba at a young age; earning a degree in pharmacy before pursuing art at the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; her parents' businesses; struggling with English and becoming a citizen; the influence of architecture, geometry, and math in her work; her first

big show at the American Craft Museum; working at Penland School of Crafts and Cranbrook Academy of Art; her several commissioned works; light and shadow in her accordion-shaped pieces; working with the Peace Corps and weaving in Peru; learning pre-Colombian weaving techniques; working on a commissioned project in Mexico with native weavers; experimenting with size and color in weaving; teaching at the Tyler School of Art; the influence of travel in her work; the qualities of jute, sisal, metal, and horsehair in weaving. Akers also recalls Cindy Cleary, Guido Llinas, Abelardo Estorino, Marianne Strengell, Ed Rossback, Glen Kaufman, Julia and Isiah Zagar, Joyce Chow, Katie and Billy Bernstein, Tom Suomalainen, Ron Garfinkel, Lee Nordness, Janet Taylor, Leora Stewart, Aron Siskin, Lewis Knauss, Agnes Martin, and others.

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## General

Originally recorded on 3 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 10 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 59 min.

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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:

- Decorative arts
- Women artists
- Women educators
- Women textile artists

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Names:

- Art Institute of Chicago -- Student
- Cranbrook Academy of Art -- Faculty
- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
- Penland School of Handicrafts -- Faculty
- Tyler School of Art -- Faculty

### Occupations:

- Educators -- California
- Fiber artists -- California
- Weavers -- California