



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Peter Alexander

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 Peter Alexander
<b>Date:</b>	1995 December 13-1996 May 8
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.alexan95
<b>Creator:</b>	Alexander, Peter, 1939- (Interviewee) Karlstrom, Paul J. (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	117 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Peter Alexander, 1995 December 13-1996 May 8, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Peter Alexander, 1995 December 13-1996 May 8, 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. Funding for the transcription provided by the Pasadena Art Alliance.

### Acquisition Information

Funding for this interview provided by Pasadena Art Alliance

### Available Formats

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

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## Biographical / Historical

Peter Alexander (1939- ) is a sculptor from Los Angeles, California.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Peter Alexander conducted 1995 December 13-1996 May 8, by Paul Karlstrom, for the Archives of American Art.

## Scope and Contents

This interview begins with an account of Alexander's family and educational background, including his study of architecture with Richard Neutra and further study in Philadelphia, London, and at USC, Los Angeles. He recalls working for architect William Pereira; his first New York exhibition; Robert Elkon and Leo Castelli, Los Angeles artists, the Hollywood connection; and Los Angeles in the 1960s. Alexander discusses the differences between New York and Los Angeles art worlds; his attachment to southern California; his arrogance in resisting the New York system and all it implied. He goes on to describe himself as a pagan, sensualist, and voyeur, qualities that inform his work, as does entertainment and popular culture.

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## Scope and Contents

Autobiographical in quality, his work embodies the notion of personality and character in determining his expression. He further discusses lessons learned from the old masters, the idea of artists as manipulators and art as voyeurism. Alexander considers his possible placement as a contemporary symbolist, contrasting his work to other current art which he sees as cynical. Finally, he claimed to see a new context and position for his art as a result of the interview, providing fresh insight into his activity as an artist.

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## General

Originally recorded on 7 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 12 digital wav file. Duration is 6 hrs., 7 minutes.

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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:

Sculptors -- California -- Los Angeles -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews  
Sound recordings

Names:

Alexander, Peter, 1939-  
Castelli, Leo  
Elkon, Robert, 1928-1983  
Neutra, Richard Joseph, 1892-1970  
Pereira, William L., 1909-1985