



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Neda Al-Hilali

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

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|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Repository:</b>      | Archives of American Art  |
| <b>Title:</b>           | Oral history interview with Neda Al-Hilali  |
| <b>Date:</b>            | 2006 July 18-19   |
| <b>Identifier:</b>      | AAA.alhila06  |
| <b>Creator:</b>         | Al-Hilali, Neda, 1938- (Interviewee)<br>Riedel, Mija, 1958- (Interviewer)<br>Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America  |
| <b>Extent:</b>          | 116 Pages (Transcript)<br>22 Items (Sound recording: 22 sound files (7 hr., 46 min.); digital, wav)   |
| <b>Language:</b>        | English .   |
| <b>Digital Content:</b> | <a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Neda Al-Hilali, 2006 July 18-19, Transcript</a><br><a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Neda Al-Hilali, 2006 July 18-19, 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.

### Available Formats

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

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## Biographical / Historical

Neda Al-Hilali (1938- ) is a fiber artist and weaver in Los Angeles, California. Mija Riedel (1958- ) is a curator and writer in San Francisco, California.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Neda Al-Hilali conducted 2006 July 18-19, by Mija Riedel, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at the artist's home, in Los Angeles, California.

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## Scope and Contents

Al-Hilali speaks of her childhood in Czechoslovakia and Bavaria; studying language in London; her experience living in Baghdad, Iraq with her first husband; moving to California and completing her undergraduate and graduate degrees at UCLA; teaching experiences at Scripps College, Claremont Graduate University, California State University Los Angeles, and UCLA; the installation processes of Beach Occurrence with Tongues, Black Passage, the Cassiopeia series, and others; frustrations she encountered with commission work; the rich history of the fiber tradition; travels to Afghanistan, Japan, and Oaxaca, Mexico; achieving gestural and painterly qualities with fiber; the importance of color in textile work in the Middle East; experiences with galleries, including the Hunsaker/Schlesinger Gallery in Santa Monica, California; utilizing a Ouija board for reflection and creative guidance; issues such as global warming and over-development; the status of women in Afghanistan under Taliban rule; the gratitude she feels at being a part of the fiber tradition; and plans for the future. Al-Hilali also recalls Bernard Kester, Jim Bassler, Fern Jacobs, Joyce Hunsaker, Alice Simsar, and others.

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## General

Originally recorded on 4 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 22 digital wav files. Duration is 7 hr., 46 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:

- Climatic changes
- Decorative arts
- Women artists
- Women educators
- Women textile artists

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Names:

- Bassler, James W., 1933-  
California State University, Los Angeles -- Faculty  
Claremont Graduate University -- Faculty
- Hunsaker, Joyce Badgley  
Hunsaker/Schlesinger Gallery
- Jacobs, Ferne K. (Ferne Kent), 1942-  
Kester, Bernard  
Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America  
Scripps College -- Faculty
- Simsar, Alice  
Taliban  
University of California, Los Angeles -- Faculty  
University of California, Los Angeles -- Students

Occupations:

Educators -- California  
Fiber artists -- California

Functions:

Art commissions