



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Edgar and Joyce Anderson

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Edgar and Joyce Anderson
Identifier:	AAA.anders02a
Date:	2002 September 17-19
Creator:	Anderson, Edgar, approximately 1922- (Interviewee) Anderson, Joyce, 1925- (Interviewee) Gold, Donna, 1953- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	143 Pages (Transcript) 34 Items (Sound recording: 34 sound files (5 hr., 56 min.); digital, wav)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Edgar and Joyce Anderson, 2002 September 17-19, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Edgar and Joyce Anderson, 2002 September 17-19, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

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 available online.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Edgar Anderson (1922-) and Joyce Anderson (1923-) are woodworkers from Morristown, New Jersey.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Edgar and Joyce Anderson conducted 2002 September 17-19, by Donna Gold, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Morristown, New Jersey.

Scope and Contents

The interview begins in the home of their frequent patrons, Sandra and Lou Grotta, in Harding Township, New Jersey. The Grottas are not present. They discuss several of their pieces in situ, including tables, beds, a piano bench, the grandfather clock (carved in the shape of Edgar's arm wearing a wristwatch), and the Knight table. Many of these pieces are discussed in detail in terms of their design and construction. They also allude briefly to other pieces in the Grotta's collection by Toshiko Takaezu, Hans Wegner, Bill Wyman, Sam Maloof, and Bob Stocksdale. The Grotta's house, designed by architect Richard Meier, is also discussed. Edgar recalls that Meier designed the house to accommodate the collection. They also talk about the Grotta's participation in the American Craft Council, and the relationship among collectors. The interview continues at the artists' home Harding Township, New Jersey. They discuss several projects for other clients, and they reflect on the relationships that developed. These include: a gaming table for Doug Dayton of Montearth Lumber Company, a jewelry chest for Thelma Newman, collaboration with Newman on a book for Chilton Publishing Company (not published), and a figural chest for Mako Stewart, which is still in the artists' private collection. They reflect on their private and professional partnership and the balance of skills they shared. They recall that their early success was bolstered by a New York Times article by Betty Pepis. This publicity led to new clients, such as Reverend John Mason of the Episcopal Chapel at the University of Maine, who is discussed in detail along with his wife Elizabeth Mason. They explain their expertise in humidity and wood shrinkage, including their work as consultants for the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, before it became the American Craft Museum. There is lengthy discussion of the Andersons' own house, which they designed and built themselves over a period of years. Frank Lloyd Wright was an influence. They discuss other church commissions in general, speaking of the influence of their spirituality. St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Haworth, New Jersey, is discussed in some detail. Edgar briefly talks about a local World Trade Center memorial which he has been working on. They recall the importance of the support of the American Craft Museum, Aileen Osborne (Vanderbilt) Webb, and David Campbell. They discuss in depth their time in Honduras, under the sponsorship of the USAID program, teaching craft techniques to local inhabitants. Joyce describes this as a Kennedy era demonstration program. Other participants in the Honduras program included Dave Chapman, Roy Ginstrom, Bill Wyman, and Emil Milan. They also recall participating in a similar program in Antigua. They also recall Herb and Marje Noyes, Ruth Martin, Patricia Malarcher, John Geraci, Mike Langan, Bob and Rowena MacPhail, Sterling North, Zelda Strecker, Paul Smith, Tom Tibbs, Walker Weed, Lois Moran, Toshiko Takaezu, Tapio Wirkkala, Jack Lenor Larsen, Edward Cooke, Michael Stone, John McPhee, and Dot Blanchard.

General

Originally recorded 5 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 34 digital wav files. Duration is 5 hr., 56 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Decorative arts
September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001
Woodworkers -- New Jersey -- Interviews.

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

American Craft Council
American Crafts Council. Museum of Contemporary Crafts
Campbell, David Robert, 1907-1963
Chilton Professional Automotive (Firm)
Cooke, Edward S., 1954-
Grotta, Lou
Grotta, Sandra
Larsen, Jack Lenor, 1927-2020
Malarcher, Patricia
Maloof, Sam
McPhee, John, 1931-
Meier, Richard, 1934-
Milan, Emil, 1922-1985
Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Smith, Paul J., 1931-
Stocksdale, Bob, 1913-2003
Takaezu, Toshiko
Tibbs, Thomas S., 1917-2002
United States. Agency for International Development
Webb, Aileen O.
Wegner, Hans J., 1914-
Wirkkala, Tapio, 1915-1985
Wyman, William, 1922-1980

Places:

Honduras -- Description and Travel
World Trade Center Site (New York, N.Y.)