



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Benny Andrews

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Benny Andrews
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.andrew68
<b>Date:</b>	1968 June 30
<b>Creator:</b>	Andrews, Benny, 1930-2006 (Interviewee) Ghent, Henri, 1926- (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	29 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Benny Andrews, 1968 June 30, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

This interview is part of the Archives' 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 others.

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## Biographical / Historical

Benny Andrews (1930-2006) was a painter and lecturer from New York, New York.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Benny Andrews conducted 1968 June 30, by Henri Ghent, for the Archives of American Art.

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## Scope and Contents

Andrews remembers his childhood on a sharecropping farm in Georgia, difficulties he faced being light-skinned, and his struggle to get an education. He speaks of the role of the 4-H Club in his escape from that life and his attempts at painting using improvised materials. Andrews describes how he worked his way to college and joined the Air Force. He recalls passing himself off as white in certain situations, the insights into race relations he was able to gain that way, and his consciousness of being black as it affects his art. He notes the importance of other artists who encouraged him, and ends with a general characterization of his work.

## General

Originally recorded on 1 sound tape reel. Reformatted in 2010 as 2 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hrs., 12 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:

- African American artists
- Painters -- New York (State) -- Interviews
- Painting, Modern -- 20th century -- New York (State) -- New York

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings