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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Ralph Bacerra

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Ralph Bacerra
Date:	2004 April 7-19
Identifier:	AAA.bacerr04
Creator:	Bacerra, Ralph, 1938-2008 (Interviewee) Lloyd, Frank, 1951- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	45 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Ralph Bacerra, 2004 April 7-19, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Ralph Bacerra, 2004 April 7-19, 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 on line

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Ralph Bacerra (1938-2008) was a ceramicist of Los Angeles, California. Frank Lloyd is a gallery owner from Santa Monica, California.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Ralph Bacerra conducted 2004 April 7-19, by Frank Lloyd, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Los Angeles, California.

Scope and Contents

Bacerra speaks of his family background; his high school art teachers; attending Chouinard Art Institute and his friendship with his ceramics instructor Vivika Heino and her husband Otto; the interaction among ceramicists in Los Angeles around 1960; attending a workshop taught by Shoji Hamada; teaching at Chouinard Art Institute; building a studio; teaching a workshop at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts; traveling to Japan and Taiwan and the influence of Asian ceramics on his artwork. Bacerra also speaks of his daily work routine; the importance of glaze technology; changes in ceramic education and the market for ceramics in the last 50 years; exhibiting works at American Hand, Garth Clark Galleries, and Frank Lloyd Gallery; taking part in pivotal exhibitions including "Objects: USA"; attending National Council for the Education of Ceramic Arts conferences and the current sense of community among early ceramic artists; the importance of craft publications and critical writing; commissions completed throughout his career; attending museums for ideas and inspiration; teaching and the careers of his former students; and how reviews impact his work. Bacerra recalls Susan Peterson, Peter Voukos, Bernard Kester, Laura Andreson, Sam Maloof, Elsa Rady, Adrian Saxe, and others.

General

Originally recorded 2 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 9 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 23 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Ceramicists -- California -- Los Angeles -- Interviews
- Ceramics -- Study and teaching
- Ceramics. -- Economic aspects
- Decorative arts

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Andreson, Laura
- Chouinard Art Institute (Los Angeles, Calif.) -- Faculty
- Chouinard Art Institute (Los Angeles, Calif.) -- Students
- Hamada, Shōji, 1894-1978
- Heino, Otto, 1915-2009
- Heino, Vivika, 1910-1995
- Kester, Bernard
- Maloof, Sam
- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
- Peterson, Susan, 1925-2009
- Rady, Elsa, 1943-
- Saxe, Adrian Anthony, 1943-
- Voukos, Peter, 1924-2002