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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Dorothy Gill Barnes

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

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Dorothy Gill Barnes
Identifier:	AAA.barnes03
Date:	2003 May 2-7
Creator:	Barnes, Dorothy Gill, 1927- Cubbs, Joanne (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	67 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Dorothy Gill Barnes, 2003 May 2-7, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Dorothy Gill Barnes, 2003 May 2-7, 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

Dorothy Gill Barnes (1927-) is a basket maker of Worthington, Ohio. Joanne Cubbs (1955-) is a writer and curator.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Dorothy Gill Barnes conducted 2003 May 2-7, by Joanne Cubbs, for the Archives of American Art, at the artist's home, in Worthington, Ohio, as part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

Scope and Contents

Barnes speaks of her childhood in Iowa; studying art at Coe College, Minneapolis School of Art, University of Iowa, and Cranbrook Academy of Art; her experiences teaching art in a junior high school, college, and at workshops; the role of her family in her artistic career; she describes shows in the 1970s that inspired her interest in basketry, including the Lausanne Biennale, the Miniature Textile Exhibition in London and "In Praise of Hands" at the Ontario Science Centre, Toronto, 1974; the benefits of craft schools in arts education; her travels in Australia, New Zealand, Spain, France, China, and Honduras; collaborations and apprenticeships; her involvement in "Weave a Real Peace," a community aspiring to "improve the world through textiles"; women and ethnicity as inspiration; her reverence for nature and her knowledge and respect for trees; her working environment in her studio and in the woods; the elements of play and experimentation in her work; her use of dendroglyphs; the role of universities in the craft movement; critiques from various audiences and in periodicals; the value of a photo archive; she explains how the material and traditions in basketry influence her art; the difficulty and beauty of working with organic materials; the evolution of her work; her exhibition history; her political and social activities; her involvement in national and local organizations; the importance of timing as part of her artistic process; her use of power tools and collaborators; and she concludes with a statement about the National Basketry Organization. She recalls John Schulze, Audrey Flack, Osma Gallinger Tod, Jane Sauer, Ed Rossbach, Pat Hickman, Lillian Elliot, David and Judy Drew, Jack Lenor Larsen, Jiro Yonezawa, Elsabe Dixon, and others.

General

Originally recorded 4 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 14 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 38 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Decorative arts
Women artists

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America

Occupations:

Basket makers -- Ohio