



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Robert Bechtle

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Robert Bechtle
<b>Date:</b>	2010 February 8-9
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.becht10
<b>Creator:</b>	Bechtle, Robert, 1932-2020 (Interviewee) Richards, Judith Olch (Interviewee)
<b>Extent:</b>	75 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Robert Bechtle, 2010 February 8-9, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Robert Bechtle, 2010 February 8-9, 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Interviewee Robert Bechtle (1932-2020) was a Photorealist painter in San Francisco, California. Interviewer Judith Olch Richards (1947- ) is former Executive director of iCI in New York, New York.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Robert Bechtle conducted 2010 February 8 and 9, by Judith Olch Richards, for the Archives of American Art, at Bechtle's home and studio, in San Francisco, California.

Interview of Robert Bechtle, conducted by Judith Richards for the Archives of American Art, in Bechtle's home in San Francisco, California on February 8 and 9, 2010. This is a second interview conducted for the archives, continuing from an interview with Bechtle in 1980. The interview mainly focuses on how his work has changed or remained the same since 1980; in particular his lighting study from midday to morning and evening; the grouping of photos to create a painting; new technology; the continuing challenges of his work; dispelling popular notions about his work such as the idea of neutral light and the Americana symbolism of his cars; his teaching endeavors at San Francisco State University and California College of Arts and Crafts; and the transition from his gallery residency at OK Harris to Barbara Gladstone; Bechtle also recalls Ivan Karp, Chuck Close, Ralph Goings, Edward Hopper, Jerome Witkin, Rackstraw Jones, Kathan Brown, Wayne Theibaud, Mitzi Pederson, and others.

## General

Originally recorded on 6 memory cards. Reformatted in 2010 as 6 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 56 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:

Painters -- California -- San Francisco -- Interviews  
Photo-realism

### Types of Materials:

Interviews  
Sound recordings