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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Phillip A. Bruno

Funding for this interview was provided by the Widgeon Point Charitable Foundation.
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 Phillip A. Bruno
Identifier:	AAA.bruno09
Date:	2009 January 13-21
Extent:	46 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	Bruno, Phillip A. McElhinney, James Lancel, 1952- Widgeon Point Charitable Foundation
Language:	English .

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.

Biographical / Historical

Phillip A. Bruno (1930-) is an art collector and director of Marlborough Gallery, New York, New York.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Phillip A. Bruno conducted 2009 January 13-21, by James McElhinney, for the Archives of American Art, at the Archives of American Art, in New York, New York.

Scope and Contents

Bruno speaks of some his earliest impressions of art while growing up in New York and Paris; attending Columbia University, where he majored in the history of painting and architecture and studied under Meyer Schapiro; his first job at the Weyhe Gallery as a gallery assistant; helping create the Grace Borgenicht Gallery, where he served as director for five years; traveling to Mexico, meeting Jose Cuevas and exhibiting his work at the Edward Loeb Gallery in Paris; traveling to Brazil and meeting a family of naturalist painters who emphasized the importance of painting outdoors, unlike many painters from the New York school; working with Henry Clews and the La Napoule Art Foundation; selling a piece of Salvador Dali jewelry made by Carlos Alamanni to Hugh Hefner, founder of Playboy Magazine; working

as director of The World House Gallery and selling works by Francis Bacon and Max Ernst to clients such as Joseph Hirshhorn and Roy Neuberger; organizing an exhibition of artists shown at the Brussels World Fair in 1958 at World House and meeting George Staempfli through the artist Joan Brown; moving from World House to the Staempfli Gallery in 1960 to work as co-director; the Staempfli Gallery's role in the international art world; an original drawing by Leonard Baskin inscribed to Phillip in 1954; selling the work of artists such as Harry Bertoia, Fritz Koenig, and David Park; meeting Henri Matisse in Paris at the age of 21; visiting the studios of Alexander Calder and Mark Rothko; the difference between galleries that can spot new talent and galleries that sell certain artists well; the art market becoming less idealistic and more commercial; the rising importance of auction houses and the possibility of their taking the place of traditional art galleries; the move of the Staempfli Gallery to the SoHo neighborhood and soon after, leaving Staempfli for Marlborough, where he was one of the New York directors for 18 years; his appreciation for the creativity of others, retirement and current plans to write his memoirs. Bruno also recalls Milton Avery, Gabor Peterdi, Hans Muller, Ralston Crawford, Randall Morgan, Charlotte Willard, Dorothy Satterlee, Masayuki Nagare, Claude Bernardin, Kubach-Wilmsen, Louise Nevelson, Cladio Bravo, Lopez Garcia, Alberto Giacometti, The Barnes Foundation, Richard Estes, Alex Katz, and Neil Wliver.

General

Originally recorded on 2 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 2 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 45 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Collectors and collecting -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Avery, Milton, 1885-1965
Bacon, Francis, 1909-1992
Barnes Foundation
Baskin, Leonard, 1922-2000
Bertoia, Harry
Bravo, Claudio, 1936-2011
Brown, Joan, 1938-1990
Calder, Alexander, 1898-1976
Clews, Henry, 1876-1937
Columbia University -- Students
Crawford, Ralston, 1906-1978
Cuevas, José Luis, 1934-
Ernst, Max, 1891-1976
Estes, Richard, 1932-
Exposition universelle et internationale (1958 : Brussels, Belgium)
Giacometti, Alberto, 1901-1966
Grace Borgenicht Gallery

Hefner, Hugh M. (Hugh Marston), 1926-
Hirshhorn, Joseph H.
Katz, Alex, 1927-
Koenig, Fritz, 1924-
Kubach, Wolfgang, 1936-
Kubach-Wilmsen, Anna Maria, 1937-
La Napoule Art Foundation, Henry Clews Memorial
Marlborough Gallery
Matisse, Henri, 1869-1954
Morgan, Randall, 1920-
Nagare, Masayuki, 1923-
Neuberger, Roy R.
Nevelson, Louise, 1899-1988
Park, David, 1911-1960
Peterdi, Gabor
Rothko, Mark, 1903-1970
Schapiro, Meyer, 1904-
Staempfli, George W.
Weyhe Gallery
Widgeon Point Charitable Foundation
Willard, Charlotte
World House Galleries

Occupations:

Gallery directors -- New York (State) -- New York