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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Marek Cecula

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Marek Cecula
Date:	2009 May 19-20
Identifier:	AAA.cecula09
Creator:	Cecula, Marek, 1944- (Interviewee) Riedel, Mija, 1958- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	104 Pages (Transcript) 10 Items (Sound recording: 10 sound files (4 hr., 55 min.); digital, wav)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Marek Cecula, 2009 May 19-20, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Marek Cecula, 2009 May 19-20, 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.

Restrictions

For information on how to access this interview contact Reference Services.

Biographical / Historical

Marek Cecula (1944-) is a ceramist and designer, who lives and works in New York and Poland.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Marek Cecula conducted 2009 May 19-20, by Mija Riedel, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at Cecula's studio, in New York, New York.

Scope and Contents

Marek Cecula speaks of his childhood in Kielce, Poland, during World War II; his move to Israel at age 16; studies with ceramists Gdula Ogen and Jean Mayer; the influence of Japanese ceramics on his early studies; life on the kibbutz HaSolelim in the late 1960s and early 1970s; the influence of Kurt and Gerda Spurey and their use of porcelain and slip-casting; his work in both functional and sculptural ceramics; his move to Tel Aviv in early 1970s, then to a commune in Binyamina in 1971; his move to Curitiba, Brazil, and subsequent work with Schmidt porcelain factory; "Art Project 79" exhibition, La Jola, Curitiba, Brazil, 1979; his move to Washington, D.C., with girlfriend (later wife) Lanie in 1976; Klepisko (2008); the cyclical nature in his work; move to New York City in late 1970s; the Soho arts scene in the 1970s and '80s; his work blending design and sculpture; establishing Contemporary Porcelain gallery, 1978; interest in work by Memphis Group, Peter Shire, Jack Earl, Ken Price, and Ron Nagle; head of ceramics department, at Parsons School of Design, New York City (1985-2004); continued design and production work, including for Tiffany & Co. and Barneys New York; establishment of Modus Design firm; continued exploration of industrial processes and use of decals in his work; influence of Howard Kottler; his quest to balance digital and handmade processes, and the continued importance of the tactile; "Scatology" exhibition; series Hygiene, his first purely sculptural series; Porcelain Carpet; representation at Garth Clark Gallery (New York City, Los Angeles, and Kansas City, Missouri); series Violations; series Mutants; series Industrial Interference; "Interface" exhibition (2002), in response to terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001; Look Into My Mind; The Stand For the Heroes, 2001; series Beauty of Imperfection; move to Poland in early 2000s; a teaching/artistic position at Bergen National Academy of Arts, Norway; establishment of Design Centrum Kielce in late 2000s; Menorah, 2007, Kielce (site-specific); Six Stations, 2007, Porsgrunn, Norway (site-specific); future projects for the city of Kielce; work with the Łódź Design Festival, Poland, and design center in Cieszyn, Poland; "kilo of earth" product; Last Supper; Mandala; Islam; limitations and advantages of ceramics as a medium; his globalized, multicultural experiences and outlook; the European vanguard in ceramics; periodicals and publications of interest; writers of interest: Edmund de Waal, Jorunn Veiteberg, Janet Koplos; the "desire society"; curating Third Biennale for Israeli Ceramics, 2004; fusion art, craft, and design; "Object Factory: The Art of Industrial Ceramics," Gardiner Museum, Toronto, 2008; redefinition of the concept of the object.

General

Originally recorded on 3 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 10 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 55 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Ceramicists -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Ceramics
- Designers -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Kibbutzim
- World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

Barneys New York
Cecula, Lanie
De Waal, Edmund
Earl, Jack
Garth Clark Gallery (New York, N.Y.)
George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art
Koplos, Janet
Kottler, Howard, 1930-1989
Kunst- og designhögskolen i Bergen
Mayer, Jean
Memphis (Group)
Nagle, Ron
Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Ogen, Gdula, 1929-
Parsons School of Design -- Faculty
Price, Kenneth, 1935-2012
Shire, Peter
Spurey, Gerda
Spurey, Kurt, 1941-
Tiffany and Company
Veiteberg, Jorunn, 1955-

Occupations:

Ceramicists

Places:

Brazil -- Description and Travel
Israel -- Description and Travel
Poland -- description and travel
SoHo (New York, N.Y.) -- Description and Travel