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Oral history interview with John Cederquist

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with John Cederquist
Date:	2009 April 14-15
Identifier:	AAA.cederq09
Creator:	Cederquist, John (Interviewee) Riedel, Mija, 1958- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	11 Items (Sound recording: 11 sound files (4 hr., 54 min.); digital, wav file) 111 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with John Cederquist, 2009 April 14-15, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with John Cederquist, 2009 April 14-15, 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 online.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

John Cederquist (1946-) creates fine art furniture and wood sculpture. Cederquist is known for using trompe l'oeil in his work. He was educated at Long Beach State University and teaches at Saddleback College.

Scope and Contents

An interview of John Cederquist conducted 2009 April 14-15, by Mija Riedel, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at Cederquist's studio, in San Clemente, California.

Scope and Contents

John Cederquist speaks of his recent series Dollar Bill; his long-standing interest in perspective and use of tool imagery in his work; his childhood in Southern California; his early interest in art through custom car art; high school art instruction and focusing on craft; earning undergraduate and graduate degrees at California State University, Long Beach in the late 1960s and early 1970s; teaching at Saddleback College, Mission Viejo, California, starting in the early 1970s; work in wood and leather; other brief teaching jobs in Southern California universities; early exhibitions; exhibition and demonstrations at Parnham House, Beaminster, England, 1978; starting to teach perspective at Saddleback; Number One; the Egg and the Eye gallery/ cafe, Los Angeles, California; Game Table [1982]; Auntie Macassar Goes West, 1987-88; philosophical and aesthetic differences between wood artists on the East and West coasts; exhibition: "Material Evidence: Master Craftsmen Explore ColorCore," Workbench: the Gallery, New York, New York, 1984; "California Woodworking," the Oakland Museum [of California, 1980; Thonet catalog as source material]; influence of animation in film and television; the perceptual and conceptual issues in translating two dimensions into three, and vice versa; the nature of illusion and perception; inclusion of work in an exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1989; the influence of How to Wrap Five Eggs: Traditional Japanese Packaging, Hideyuki Oka, Trumbull, Connecticut: Weatherhill, 1967; use of the Thomas Chippendale book (1754) as source material; subtle influence of cubism on Ghost Boy [1992] piece; his choice of furniture as the vehicle for his aesthetic exploration; series Furniture That Builds Itself (1991-2007), and continued influence of cartoons and animation; his choice of different kinds of wood; series How to Wrap Five Crates; series Kimonos and the influence of Japanese aesthetics; When Machines Dream of Hokusai [1995]: Road to Dreamland; series Wave (early to mid-1990s), and Tubular [1990], the first in the series; series Kosode; series This Is Not Lunch; historical Japanese tattoos as a source of inspiration; "Furniture That Builds Itself," Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York, New York, 2003; sense of humor and "goofiness" in his work; Flat Foot Floogie Builds a Bench. [2003]; influence of photography on his work; his pieces as functional furniture and the artistic potential therein; social commentary in his recent Kosode pieces; Heavenly Victory; how his pieces get named; "The Art of John Cederquist: Reality of Illusion," Oakland Museum of California, 1999-2000; Breakthrough series: Steamer, early 1990s; Top Drawer (1985); Space Age Wave Machine (1999); use of thick wood instead of veneer; strengths and weaknesses of a university setting for art studies; the importance of being part of the craft movement; the role of Garth Clark's gallery in the movement; the importance of working with the Franklin Parrasch gallery; his admiration for art critic Robert Hughes; the role of online media in art journalism and criticism and journalism. He also recalls Gary Zuercher, Franklin Parrasch, John Snidecor, George Turnbull, John Makepeace, Edward S. Cooke, Garry Knox Bennett, Wendy Maruyama, Tom Gaines, Bob and Chris Straight, Arthur Danto, and Roberta Smith.

General

Originally recorded on 3 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 11 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 54 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Study and teaching
Decorative arts
Furniture designers -- California -- Interviews
Sculptors -- California -- Interviews
Woodworkers -- California -- Interviews.

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Bennett, Garry Knox, 1934-
California State University -- Students
Clark, Garth, 1947-
Cooke, Edward S., 1954-
Danto, Arthur Coleman, 1924-
Franklin Parrasch Gallery
Gaines, Tom
Hughes, Robert, 1938-2012
Makepeace, John
Maruyama, Wendy, 1952-
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Oakland Museum
Parrasch, Franklin
Saddleback College -- Faculty
Smith, Roberta
Snidecor, John
Straight, Bob
Straight, Chris
Turnbull, George
Zuecher, Gary

Occupations:

Cabinetmakers -- California -- Interviews