



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Robert Colescott

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Robert Colescott
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.colesc99
<b>Date:</b>	1999 April 14
<b>Creator:</b>	Colescott, Robert, 1925-2009 (Interviewee) Karlstrom, Paul J. (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	23 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Robert Colescott, 1999 April 14, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Robert Colescott, 1999 April 14, 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. Funding for the transcription of this interview is provided by Richard Baker Fund.

### Available Formats

Transcript available online

### Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

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## Biographical / Historical

Robert Colescott (1925-2009) was a painter from San Francisco, California and Tucson, Arizona. Colescott was raised in Oakland, California. He attended San Francisco State University and University of California at Berkeley (B.A. 1949; M.A., 1952). After receiving his bachelor's degree, he studied in Paris with abstract painter Fernand Léger. From 1976-1985 he taught at the California School of Fine Arts, and was named Professor Emeritus at the University of Arizona, Tucson in 1985.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Robert Colescott conducted 1999 April 14, by Paul Karlstrom, for the Archives of American Art, at his studio, in Tucson, Arizona.

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## Scope and Contents

Colescott discusses his early years growing up in Oakland; his education; military service; his experiences as a student at San Francisco State University and University of California, Berkeley; the influences at University of California, Berkeley, and of Paul Cézanne on the teaching by professors Erle Loran and Worth Ryder; working at the California School of Fine Arts; issues of race in art; views on the African-American community's desire to control visual statements by black artists, and why his work is viewed as stereotyping; political views; the work of artist Betye Saar; and his work, "George Washington Carver Crossing the Delaware."

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## General

Originally recorded on 1 sound cassette. Reformatted in 2010 as 2 digital wav files. Duration is 1 hr.

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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:

African American artists

Types of Materials:

Interviews

Sound recordings

Names:

Cézanne, Paul, 1839-1906

Loran, Erle, 1905-1999

Ryder, Worth, 1884-1960

Saar, Betye

San Francisco State University -- Students

University of California, Berkeley -- Students

University of California, San Francisco. School of Fine Arts

Occupations:

Painters -- Arizona -- Tucson

Painters -- California -- San Francisco