



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Robert Cottingham

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.

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
General.....	2
General.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	1
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Robert Cottingham
Date:	1998 July 27
Identifier:	AAA.cottin98
Creator:	Cottingham, Robert, 1935- (Interviewee) Brown, Robert F. (Interviewer)
Extent:	2 Sound cassettes (Sound recording (2 hr.; 8 min.); analog) 61 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Robert Cottingham, 1998 July 27, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Robert Cottingham, 1998 July 27, 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 is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

Biographical / Historical

Robert Cottingham (1935-) is a painter and printmaker from Newtown, Connecticut.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Robert Cottingham conducted 1998 July 27, by Robert F. Brown, for the Archives of American Art, in Cottingham's studio, Newtown, Connecticut.

Scope and Contents

Cottingham speaks of being raised in Brooklyn; drawing from an early age; the New York World's Fair, 1939-1940, and the tremendous impact it had on him, as did buildings, signs, and great bustle of Times Square; lasting impact of Edward Hopper's "Sunday Morning," which he saw at the Whitney Museum; his

love of using a T-square and triangle in industrial design courses at Brooklyn Technical High School and the influence on his work; working in a Manhattan advertising agency for 2 1/2 years; army service in Orleans, France as a mapmaker; working as an art director at Young and Rubicam advertising agency in Manhattan (1959-1964) which exposed him to great variety of print and graphic media; work in Young and Rubicam's Los Angeles office; first painting in NYC in 1963; painting steadily in L.A. which led to first shows (1968-1970) at Molly Barnes Gallery; use of photographs and sketches to produce paintings; avoidance of narrative, just suggestions of places, and incorporation of advertising signs beginning in the mid-1960s; living entirely on his paintings by 1970; breakthrough in 1969 to greater use of color, bolder design, and 3-D illusion; adoption of square format and depiction of fragmentary glimpses of things which led to leap of quality; and sticking with this mode ever since. Cottingham also recalls John Rawlings, Emerson Woelffer, Robert Irwin, Chuck and Leslie Close, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 2 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 6 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 8 min.

General

Tape 2 (Side A) also contains last part of 4/7/98 interview with Harold Tovish.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Printmakers -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Brooklyn Technical High School (Brooklyn, New York, N.Y.)
Close, Chuck, 1940-
Close, Leslie
Irwin, Robert, 1928-
Molly Barnes Gallery
New York World's Fair (1939-1940 : New York, N.Y.)
Rawlings, John, 1912-
United States. Army
Woelffer, Emerson, 1914-2003
Young & Rubicam Incorporated

Occupations:

Art directors
Cartographers
Painters -- Interviews

Places:

Times Square (New York, N.Y.)