



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Roy De Forest

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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/>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Roy De Forest
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.defore04
<b>Date:</b>	2004 April 7-June 30
<b>Creator:</b>	De Forest, Roy, 1930-2007 Matteson, Lynn Robert (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	80 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Roy De Forest, 2004 April 7-June 30, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Roy De Forest, 2004 April 7-June 30, 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.

### Available Formats

Transcript available on-line.

### Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

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## Biographical / Historical

Interviewee Roy De Forest (1930-2007) was a painter and sculptor from Port Costa, California. Interviewer Lynn Robert Matteson (1939- ) is an art historian from Santa Barbara, California.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Roy De Forest conducted 2004 April 7-June 30, by Lynn Robert Matteson, for the Archives of American Art, in Port Costa, California.

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## Scope and Contents

De Forest speaks of an early interest in painting and drawing; acceptance to California School of Fine Arts; his time spent in San Francisco; working at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; studying and teaching at Junior College in Yakima, California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco State, and the University of California, Davis; his relationship with other artists including Allan Stone, Allan Frumkin, Jim Newman; gallery shows at Dilexi Gallery, King Ubu Gallery, Six Gallery; time spent in the army; teaching at San Quentin State Prison; his opinions on and influence of Abstract Expressionism in his work; the influence of Paolo Uccello, Guieseppe Acrimboldo, and Piet Mondrian in his work; having a traveling show through the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City; West Coast versus East Coast artists; artists' interest in history of art; techniques in art; types of paint and motives of use, specifically between water-based paint over oil; paint technology; the durability of pieces as a result of using particular types of paint; art restoration; sculpture and frame constructions; the history of his casting period; pieces he was working on at the time of the interview; his work with tile and ceramics; his book, "Journey to the Canine Territory"; his period in scroll painting; references and iconography in his work and influences from previous artists, pieces, and periods; opinions on artists including Agnes Martin, Eva Hesse, Cy Twombly, and Joan Brown; poetical influences and his poetic preferences; Surrealist elements in pieces; his use of animals in paintings; philosophical influences; the influences of technology such as television and computers; his printmaking career; scale and size in his pieces; painting "streaks"; the creation of characters and figures in his paintings; the influence of travel on his art; the nature and attitude of contemporary artists; modern architecture and museum spaces; architects including Frank Gehry and Richard Meier; his hobbies of model creation and woodworking; and his perception of himself. De Forest recalls Hassel Smith, Richard Crozier, Robert Duncan, John Guttman, George Adams, Robert Arneson, Lucian Pompili, John Humphrey, Peter Saul, and others.

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## General

Originally recorded on 4 sound discs and 1 sound cassette. Reformatted in 2010 as 10 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 17 min.

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## General

Microphone was not working during last session, 2004 June 30. Interview equipment was replaced with an analog recorder and the sound for the last forty-five minutes is not as clear as the rest of the interview. It is difficult to hear the interviewer during this session.

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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:

- Abstract expressionism
- Painting -- Equipment and supplies
- Painting -- Technique

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings