



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Dominic Di Mare

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. 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
Scope and Contents.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Dominic Di Mare
Date:	2002 June 4-10
Identifier:	AAA.dimare02
Creator:	Di Mare, Dominic, 1932- (Interviewee) Mayfield, Signe (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	60 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Dominic Di Mare, 2002 June 4-10, Transcript

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

Patrons must use transcript. Transcript available online. Sound recordings (3 cassettes) are ACCESS RESTRICTED; Written permission required.

Biographical / Historical

Dominic Di Mare (1932-) is a fiber artist from Tiburon, California. Signe Mayfield is an art historian.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Dominic Di Mare conducted 2002 June 4-10, by Signe Mayfield, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at his home and studio, in Tiburon, California.

Scope and Contents

Di Mare speaks of growing up in Monterey, California, around thread, as his mother crocheted and his fisherman father made lures; drawing as a child; receiving the Junior Scholastic Art Awards in high school;

enrolling at Monterey Peninsula College and San Francisco State; acquiring a teacher's degree and taking a craft class; being "enthralled" by setting up a loom; teaching art in junior high schools; getting married and buying a loom; reading Craft Horizon magazine and becoming inspired by the work of Kay Sekimachi; buying yarn from Helen Pope at The Yarn Depot and forming a friendship with her; exhibiting at The Yarn Depot; participating in craft competitions and showing his work to Paul Smith, the director of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts; his first show at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in 1965; exhibiting at Museum West (the west coast extension of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts); recognizing "self and struggle and passion" in Ferne Jacobs' work; his dealers including Marjorie Annenberg (Annenberg Gallery, San Francisco), Ruth Braunstein (Braunstein/Quay Gallery, San Francisco), Susan Cummins (Susan Cummins Gallery, Mill Valley, Calif.), and Florence Duhl (Florence Duhl Gallery, New York); receiving a grant from the Marin Arts Council; quitting his teaching job, receiving an NEA grant, and becoming a full-time artist; collectors Dan and Hillary Goldstein; the beauty of poet Betty Parks' article, "Dominic Di Mare: Houses for the Sacred," in American Craft (October/November 1982); his "shrine" imagery; his military service during the Korean War and being assigned to a post office in Paris, France; going to the Louvre and encountering the Nike, "winged victory" sculpture; and Jack Lenore Larson's support.

Scope and Contents

Di Mare considers himself to be "self-taught" although he attended the California College of Arts and Crafts, San Francisco State, and Rudolph Schaefer School of Design. He also talks about autobiographical elements in his work; his "personal, artistic vocabulary"; the repetition of black and white; his use of sticks and feathers; and cross shapes, representing the church and a ship's mast. He comments on making portraits during his summers in Switzerland and making magical wands; and his artistic philosophy. Di Mare also recalls Camille Cook, Helen Drutt, Trude Guermonprez, Sophi Harpe, Gyongy Laky, Marjorie Livingston, Hal Painter, June Schwarcz, Rose Slivka, Millie Tresko, and Dorian Zachai.

General

Originally recorded 3 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 6 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 47 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 -- California
- Decorative arts
- Fiberwork
- Fishing
- Textile crafts
- Weaving -- California

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America

Occupations:

Weavers -- California -- Interviews