



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Rosalyn Drexler

Funding for this interview was provided by the Pollock-Krasner Foundation.

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical .....	1
Scope and Contents .....	1
Names and Subjects .....	
System Details .....	2

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Rosalyn Drexler
<b>Date:</b>	2017 May 17-June 2
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.drexle17
<b>Creator:</b>	Drexler, Rosalyn (Interviewee) Lyon, Christopher (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	82 Pages (Transcript) 5 Items (Sound recording: 5 sound files (3 hr., 26 min.); digital, wav)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Rosalyn Drexler, 2017 May 17-June 2, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Rosalyn Drexler, 2017 May 17-June 2, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

---

## 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

Rosalyn Drexler (1926- ) is a sculptor, playwright, and novelist in New York, New York. Christopher Lyon (1949- ) is a writer in Brooklyn, New York.

---

## Scope and Contents

An interview with Rosalyn Drexler conducted 2017 May 17 and June 2 by Christopher Lyon, for the Archives of American Art, at Garth Greenan Gallery in New York, New York.

## Scope and Contents

Drexler discusses her childhood in the Bronx; her experiences studying dance and music; her higher education at Hunter College; attending films and the Yiddish Theater; meeting her husband Sherman Drexler; her time as a professional wrestler; her memories of traveling to the South and encountering Jim Crow segregation; she describes learning about art from Sherman Drexler and her joint exhibition with Sherman; her early work in sculpture; participating in Happenings with Jim Dine; joining Anita Reuben's gallery; her debut as a playwright; her experience writing "I am the Beautiful Stranger;" the changing public perception of her and being classified as an artist; her decision to become a painter and appropriating images for her work; the influence of S. J. Perelman on her plays; her play about Joseph Cornell and ballerina Allegra Kent, and interviewing Allegra Kent; her recent artwork and preparing for her 2017 show at Garth Greenan Gallery; her artwork from the 1980s and 1990s; her comedy writing and sense of humor. Drexler also recalls Chico Marx, Jack Newfield, Igor Youskevitch, Ivan Karp, Anita Reuben, Lucas Samaras, Richard Gilman, Al Carmines, Amiri Baraka, Barbara Ann Teer, Franz Kline, Elaine De Kooning, Bill de Kooning, Andy Warhol, Jack Kroll, Lawrence Alloway, Tom Hess, Barney Newman, Harold Rosenberg, Susan Sontag, Joe Hirshhorn, Henry Geldzahler, Donald Barthelme, Kornblee Gallery, Eva Hesse, Tom Doyle, William Klein, Marilyn Monroe, Alex Katz, Alice Neel, Basquiat, Saturday Night Live, and Lenny Bruce, among others.

---

## System Details

Recorded on tascam 100MKII 022546.

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Happenings (Art)
- Segregation -- United States
- Women artists
- Women painters
- Women sculptors
- Women wrestlers

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Names:

- Alloway, Lawrence, 1926-1990
- Baraka, Amiri, 1934-2014
- Barthelme, Donald
- Basquiat, Jean-Michel, 1960-1988
- Bruce, Lenny
- Carmines, Al
- Cornell, Joseph
- De Kooning, Elaine
- De Kooning, Willem, 1904-1997

Dine, Jim, 1935-  
Doyle, Tom  
Drexler, Sherman  
Garth Greenan Gallery  
Geldzahler, Henry  
Gilman, Richard, 1923-2006  
Hess, Thomas B.  
Hesse, Eva, 1936-1970  
Hirshhorn, Joseph H.  
Hunter College -- Students  
Karp, Ivan C., 1926-2012  
Katz, Alex, 1927-  
Kent, Allegra  
Klein, William  
Kline, Franz, 1910-1962  
Kornblee Gallery  
Kroll, Jack  
Marx, Chico, 1887-1961  
Monroe, Marilyn, 1926-1962  
Neel, Alice, 1900-1984  
Newman, Barry  
Perelman, S. J. (Sidney Joseph), 1904-1979  
Reuben Gallery  
Rosenberg, Harold, 1906-1978  
Samaras, Lucas, 1936-  
Sontag, Susan, 1933-2004  
Teer, Barbara Ann, 1937-2008  
Warhol, Andy, 1928-1987  
Youskevitch, Igor, 1912-1994

Occupations:

Authors -- New York (State) -- New York  
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York  
Playwrights -- New York (State) -- New York  
Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York