



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Robert Ebendorf

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Robert Ebendorf
Identifier:	AAA.ebendo04
Date:	2004 April 16-18
Extent:	96 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	Ebendorf, Robert, 1938- Rosolowski, Tacey A. Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Language:	English

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.

Biographical / Historical

Robert Ebendorf (1938-) is a metalsmith from Greenville, North Carolina. Tacey A. Rosolowski is an art historian from Washington, D.C.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Robert Ebendorf conducted 2004 April 16-18, by Tacey Rosolowski, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Greenville, N.C.

Scope and Contents

Ebendorf speaks of growing up in Topeka, Kansas; spending time in his grandparents' tailor shop; his relationship with his parents; having difficulties in school; making jewelry in arts and crafts class; meeting Carlyle Smith and deciding to study art at the University of Kansas; staying at the University of Kansas to get his MFA in Three-Dimensional Design; taking part in important early exhibitions including the "Wichita National"; collaging in his artwork and letters; how his art professors including, Robert Montgomery, mentored him; studying metal craft in Norway on a Fulbright; getting a job teaching at Stetson University; returning to Norway on a Tiffany Grant and working in a goldsmith shop; rebuilding the metals program at the University of Georgia; traveling to Norway once again and designing for the David Anderson Firm; experimenting with mixed media and found objects in his work; exhibiting at the Susan Cummins Gallery; hunting for objects with his daughter Brittany; teaching at SUNY New Paltz; using the ColorCore material; expressing both the masculine and feminine in his art; and making crafts with his mother.

Scope and Contents

Ebendorf also speaks of his current daily routine and the importance of a home studio; the influence of Scandinavian art on his work, especially the art of Claus Bury; doing work on commission; teaching at Penland School of Crafts and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts; taking part in the founding of the Society of North American Goldsmiths and serving as President; teaching at East Carolina University; preparing students for a career in metalsmithing; the changing trends in American and European jewelry; organizing the "Conversations" series of workshops at SUNY New Paltz; reading various art publications and the need for more critical writing about craft; selling work at craft fairs; the challenges of working with various galleries and museums; the importance of his work *Lost Souls and Found Spirits*; his recent retrospective "The Jewelry of Robert Ebendorf: A Retrospective of Forty Years;" and his current work and plans for the future. Ebendorf also recalls Kurt Matzdorf, Fred Woell, Bill Brown, Philip Morton, Ronald Pearson, L. Brent Kington, Linda Darty, Jamie Bennett, Earl Krentzin, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 5 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 9 digital wav files. Duration is 6 hr., 29 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art metal-work
- Decorative arts
- Jewelers -- North Carolina -- Interviews
- Jewelry -- Design
- Jewelry making -- Equipment and supplies
- Jewelry making -- Study and teaching
- Jewelry making -- Technique
- Metal-work -- Economic aspects
- Metal-work -- Equipment and supplies

Metal-work -- Study and teaching
Metal-workers -- North Carolina -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

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