



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Tom Eckert

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.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Tom Eckert
<b>Date:</b>	2007 June 19
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.eckertt07
<b>Creator:</b>	Eckert, Tom, 1942- (Interviewee) Lauria, Jo (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
<b>Extent:</b>	44 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Tom Eckert, 2007 June 19, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Tom Eckert, 2007 June 19, 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Tom Eckert (1942- ) is a wood artist from Tempe, Arizona. Jo Lauria is a curator and arts writer from Los Angeles, California.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Tom Eckert conducted 2007 June 19, by Jo Lauria, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at the artist's home and studio in Tempe, Arizona.

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## Scope and Contents

Eckert speaks of his childhood interest in drawing; his first art lessons as a child; working as a cabinetmaker after high school; the decision to attend Arizona State University (ASU); earning very poor grades at ASU and enrolling at Phoenix College, where his art teacher inspired him to pursue art more seriously; returning

to ASU to earn his BFA and MFA.; being hired to teach at ASU; creating and heading a wood program there; and helping to design the wood studio at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts. He continues discussing his fascination with Flemish painting during his art history education; the sense of illusion present in much of his work; being drawn to wood as a medium because of its ability to be shaped into an infinite amount of forms his experience making a few large scale works of art; feeling a certain spirituality towards his studio and the tools and equipment related to his craft; the importance of first satisfying a personal creative drive, then of showing the work produced, and finally in selling the work; the ways in which galleries and museums assist in attaining those three goals; being invited to participate in a show at Galerie Lieve Hemel in Amsterdam; incorporating the Internet and new technology into the design process; mixing his own colors using pigments; his desire to create larger works in the future; and contentment with and excitement for his life as an artist. Eckert recalls William B. Dunning, James Krenov, Bob Stocksdale, Nanette L. Laitman, David Ellsworth, John Jordan, Wendell Castle, Martyle and Jerry Reinsdorf, Cervini Haas, Michael Himovitz, Joanne Rapp, James Rapp, and others.

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## General

Originally recorded on 3 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 3 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 44 min.

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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:

Decorative arts

### Types of Materials:

Interviews

Sound recordings

### Names:

Arizona State University -- Faculty

Arizona State University -- Students

Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts -- Faculty

Castle, Wendell, 1932-2018

Dunning, William

Ellsworth, David, 1944-

Haas, Cervini

Himovitz, Michael

Jordan, John

Krenov, James

Laitman, Nanette L., 1924-

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

Rapp, James

Rapp, Joanne

Reinsdorf, Jerry

Reinsdorf, Martyle

Stocksdale, Bob, 1913-2003

### Occupations:

Woodworkers -- Arizona