



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Walter Erlebacher

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Walter Erlebacher
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.erleba91
<b>Date:</b>	1991 Jan. 19
<b>Creator:</b>	Erlebacher, Walter, 1933-1991 (Interviewee) Hunter, Anne S. (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	5 Sound cassettes (Sound recording) 297 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Walter Erlebacher, 1991 Jan. 19, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

These interviews are 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 others.

### Available Formats

Transcript: 35mm microfilm reel 4777 available at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

### Restrictions

Transcript: Patrons must use microfilm copy.

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## Biographical / Historical

Walter Erlebacher (1933-1991) was a sculptor and instructor from Philadelphia, Pa.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Walter Erlebacher conducted 1991 Jan. 19, by Anne Hunter, for the Archives of American Art Philadelphia Project.

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## Scope and Contents

Erlebacher discusses his early years in Frankfurt, immigrating with his family to New York City in 1940; his education and early visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art; issues such as the Vietnam War and the resulting changes, multiculturalism; his interest in philosophy, Plato, mathematics and the golden section; his studies at Pratt, Alexander Kostellow and Ivan Rigby and the program they developed at Pratt; military service in Europe; returning to Pratt, his fellow students, and issues of representational art;

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## Scope and Contents

Eva Hesse; his shift to representational sculpture; his interest in anatomy which he taught himself and others in a private class; his friendship with other representational artists such as Philip Pearlstein, Alfred Leslie and Jack Beal; his use of mythology; Marcel Duchamp; exhibitions and his dislike of them; and a few major commissions including the Jesus in Philadelphia, the ARA commission, and the Jefferson Hospital commission he lost; Philadelphia as an art community and such controversies as the "Rocky" sculpture.

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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:

Figurative art  
Sculptors -- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia -- Interviews  
Sculpture, Modern -- 20th century -- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia

Types of Materials:

Interviews  
Sound recordings

Names:

Beal, Jack, 1931-  
Hesse, Eva, 1936-1970  
Kostellow, Alexander, 1897-1954  
Leslie, Alfred, 1927-  
Pearlstein, Philip, 1924-  
Pratt Institute. Art School  
Rigby, Ivan B.