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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Rosamund Felsen

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | Oral history interview with Rosamund Felsen |
| Identifier: | AAA.felsen04 |
| Date: | 2004 Oct. 10-11 |
| Creator: | Felsen, Rosamund, 1934- (Interviewee) Ayres, Anne, 1936- (Interviewer) |
| Extent: | 5 Sound discs (Sound recording, master (5 hrs.); digital; 2 5/8 in.) 104 Pages (Transcript) |
| Language: | English . |
| Digital Content: | Digital Content: Oral history interview with Rosamund Felsen, 2004 Oct. 10-11, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Rosamund Felsen, 2004 Oct. 10-11, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt) |

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 online

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Rosamund Felsen (1934-) is a gallery owner in Los Angeles, Calif. Anne Ayres (1936-) is a curator from Los Angeles, Calif.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Rosamund Felsen conducted 2004 October 10-11, by Anne Ayres, for the Archives of American Art, in Los Angeles, Calif.

Scope and Contents

Felsen discusses developing her gallery's stable of artists; forming a creative consciousness while working at Gemini GEL and being involved in high school theater; being unable to start a career because of the demand of raising four children; the influences of her older siblings; her marriages to Vern Hinderer and Sidney Felsen; engaging in the nascent 1960s Los Angeles art world; the founding of Gemini GEL with her husband, Sidney, and Stanley and Elyse Grinstein; her involvement with "political" artists like Jeffrey Vallance; working in the now defunct Pasadena Art Museum; that museum's downfall; starting a gallery with Timothea Stewart; her thoughts on other Los Angeles galleries of the 1970s; the influence of the Beatnik movement on L.A. art; the financial difficulties of exhibiting conceptual art; and the importance of art schools in forming a regional art scene. Felsen also mentions her ambivalent opinions of Feminist art; the exodus of a major portion of her gallery's artists; the importance of lawyers aiding artists; the characteristics of retrospective exhibitions on the Los Angeles art world; the differences between high art and design; her relationships with various collectors; socializing in the L.A. art world; the definitions of the terms "art world" and "taste"; the public's restricted access, because of admission prices and tastes, to contemporary art; how she splits funds after selling an artwork; the problems of dealing with artist's estates; the importance of her relationships with museum curators; and how she still retains enthusiasm for her work. Felsen also recalls Patrick Hogan, Lari Pittman, Michael Kelley, Man Ray, Tom Hanks, Jeffrey Vallance, Thomas Kincade, Laura Owens, Meg Cranston, Keith Sklar, Ralph Rugoff, Tim Ebner, Virginia Dwan, George Wanlass, and others.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art -- Collectors and collecting -- California -- Los Angeles
- Art -- Economic aspects
- Art -- Political aspects

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Occupations:

- Gallery owners -- California