



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Jackie Ferrara

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Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Jackie Ferrara
Date:	2009 January 16-February 13
Identifier:	AAA.ferrar09
Creator:	Ferrara, Jackie (Interviewee) Berman, Avis (Interviewer) United States. General Services Administration. Design Excellence and the Arts Oral History Project
Extent:	3 Items (Sound recording: 3 sound files (5 hr., 12 min.); digital, WMA files) 115 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Jackie Ferrara, 2009 January 16-February 13, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Jackie Ferrara, 2009 January 16-February 13, 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 is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

Restrictions

Audio: ACCESS RESTRICTED; Use requires written permission.

Biographical / Historical

Jackie Ferrara (1929-) is a sculptor. Ferrara works with the built environment in her designs for courtyards and architectural structures.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Jackie Ferrara conducted 2009 January 16-February 13, by Avis Berman, for the Archives of American Art's U.S. General Services Administration, Design Excellence and the Arts oral history project, at the Ferrara's home, in New York, New York.

Scope and Contents

Ferrara speaks of growing up in Detroit, Michigan; her early interest in mathematics and its ever present role in her work; attending Michigan State University for one year; taking fashion drawing classes at Wayne State University and her supposed lack of drawing skills; an early interest in pottery and leather making; moving to New York City in 1951 on a night train from Detroit; working at the Henry Street Playhouse and its influential role on her art; her relationship with Robert Beauchamp and her friendship with many artists in Provincetown, Massachusetts; early works, including the cotton batting works and the rope works, most of which were destroyed; her dislike of traveling and her use of imagination for inspiration; participating in the performances and happenings of Claes Oldenburg; her friendship with Robert Smithson and his influence on her later works; working with Max Protetch; never teaching art because she herself did not attend art school; her creation process of her wood and stone pieces, including their conception in early drawings; having a positive attitude towards her pieces being rebuilt because of decay; quickly moving into public art in the late 1970s, early 1980s; living and working in the same loft in New York for over 40 years; the helpful role the women's movement played in her successful career though she did not participate; receiving art grants to enable her to work for a year or two without having to find an odd job to support herself; various public art projects around the country, how they came to be, creating the works and their significance to her. Ferrara also recalls Charlotte Tokayer, Don Ferrara, Alvin Nikolai, Richard Bellamy, Mary and Paul Frank, Miles and Barbara Forst, Sally Gross, Hans Hofmann, Robert Motherwell, Helen Frankenthaler, Nat Halprin, Lucas Samara, Letty Lou Eisenhower, James Rosenquist, Marcia Marcus, Charles Addams, Eva Hesse, Frank Gallo, Tony DeLap, Dorothea Rockburne, Time Doyle, Sol LeWitt, Donald Judd, Carl Andre, Nancy Graves, Marty Greenbaum, Abe Sachs, Mel Bochner, Jan Groover, Alice Ayccock, Alice Adams, Jackie Windsor, Scott Burton, Siah Armajani, Michelle Stuart, Lucy Lippard, Zaha Hadid, Max Hutcinson, Andrea Blum, and others.

System Details

Originally recorded on 1 compact disc (2 5/8 inches).

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Women artists
- Women sculptors

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Addams, Charles, 1912-1988

Andre, Carl, 1935-
Beauchamp, Robert, 1923-
Bellamy, Richard
DeLap, Tony, 1927-2019
Eisenhauer, Lette
Ferrara, Don
Forst, Miles, 1923-
Frank, Mary, 1933-
Frankenthaler, Helen, 1928-2011
Gallo, Frank, 1933-
Graves, Nancy Stevenson, 1940-1995
Gross, Sally
Hesse, Eva, 1936-1970
Hofmann, Hans, 1880-1966
Judd, Donald, 1928-1994
LeWitt, Sol, 1928-2007
Marcus, Marcia, 1928-
Michigan State University -- Students
Motherwell, Robert
Oldenburg, Claes, 1929-
Protetch, Max
Rockburne, Dorothea
Rosenquist, James, 1933-
Samaras, Lucas, 1936-
Smithson, Robert
United States. General Services Administration. Design Excellence and the Arts Oral History Project
Wayne State University -- Students

Occupations:

Draftsmen (artists) -- New York (State) -- New York
Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York