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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Avram Finkelstein

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Avram Finkelstein
Identifier:	AAA.finkel16
Date:	2016 April 25-May 23
Creator:	Finkelstein, Avram, 1952- (Interviewee) Carr, C. (Interviewer)
Extent:	23 Items (sound files (7 hrs.); digital, wav) 148 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Avram Finkelstein, 2016 April 25-May 23, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Avram Finkelstein, 2016 April 25-May 23, 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.

Biographical / Historical

Avram Finkelstein (1952-) is an artist, writer, and activist in New York, New York. Cynthia Carr (1950-) is a writer in New York, New York.

Scope and Contents

An interview with Avram Finkelstein conducted 2016 April 25-May 23, by Cynthia Carr, for the Archives of American Art's Visual Arts and the AIDS Epidemic: An Oral History Project, at Finkelstein's home and studio in Brooklyn, New York.

Scope and Contents

Finkelstein speaks of his childhood on Long Island; attending the School of the Museum of fine Arts in Boston; moving to New York in the late 1970s; losing his first partner, Don Yowell, to AIDS; the genesis and distribution of his many AIDS activist posters; the beginnings and actions of ACT UP and Gran Fury; the context of the 1990s culture wars; the mishandling of HIV/AIDS as a public health issue in the 1980s and 1990s; his personal transformation as a result of living through the AIDS crisis; and his work on Flash Collective. Finkelstein also recalls Nan Goldin, David Armstrong, P.L. DiCorcia, Jorge Socarras, Lou Molette, Richard Goldstein, Larry Kramer, Chris Lione, Simon Doonan, Mark Simpson, Don Moffett, Todd Haynes, Robert Vasquez, Loring McAlpin, Michael Nesline, Tom Kalin, Amy Heard, Mark Harrington, Richard Deagle, Julie Tolentino, Lola Flash, Davod Meieran, Patrick Moore, Maria Maggenti, Sean Strub, Eric Sawyer, and others.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- AIDS (Disease) and the arts
- Activists (LGBTQ)
- Artists (LGBTQ)
- Authors -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Gay artists

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Visual Arts and the AIDS Epidemic: An Oral History Project