



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Godfrey Frankel

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.

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	1
Scope and Contents	1
Names and Subjects	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Godfrey Frankel
Date:	1993 Nov. 29
Identifier:	AAA.franke93
Creator:	Frankel, Godfrey (Interviewee) Foresta, Merry A. (Interviewer)
Extent:	1 Sound cassette (Sound recording (90 min.); analog) 22 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Godfrey Frankel, 1993 Nov. 29, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Godfrey Frankel, 1993 Nov. 29, 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. Funding for this interview was provided by the Jacob Kainen Oral History Fund.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Godfrey Frankel (1912-1995) was a photographer from Washington, D.C., and New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Godfrey Frankel conducted 1993 Nov. 29, by Merry Foresta, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

Frankel recalls his early "sensitivity to art" and childhood visits to the Cleveland Museum; his first job in advertising on a daily newspaper in Ohio; his first camera; being suspected as a spy for photographing outdoors in Ohio in the 1940s; his move to Washington, D.C., in the 1940s; working as the nightclub editor for a Washington newspaper; photographing alley dwellings in D.C.; photographing in 1945 the resettlement of people who were in internment camps in the U.S.; and his move to New York City and his participation in the Photo League from 1946 to 1950.

Scope and Contents

Frankel describes meetings, lectures, classes, and camaraderie among members of the Photo League; common concerns between the Photo League and the photography department at the Museum of Modern Art; Photo League projects; and photographing New York's Lower East Side. He recalls his move to Cleveland in 1950 and photographing children and industrial sites there; his job as a social worker; his move back to D.C. in 1962; his work for various government agencies; being interviewed by government agents in 1962 for suspected communist activities; the accessibility of FSA photographs at the Library of Congress; teaching managerial skills at the University of Maryland; and exhibiting his photographs in the 1980s through George Hemphill at Middendorf Gallery and at the Kathleen Ewing Gallery, both in Washington, D.C. Frankel also comments on future plans to publish a book with the Smithsonian Press.

Scope and Contents

At the end of side one Frankel mentions Jacob Reiss, but called after reviewing the tape to say he meant Lewis Hine.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Photographers -- Washington (D.C.) -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Photo League