



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Mordi Gassner

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.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Mordi Gassner
Date:	1982 Apr. 16
Identifier:	AAA.gassne82
Creator:	Gassner, Mordi, 1899-1995 (Interviewee) Pennington, Estill Curtis (Interviewer)
Extent:	3 Items (sound files Sound recording; digital, wav file) 24 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Mordi Gassner, 1982 Apr. 16, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Mordi Gassner, 1982 Apr. 16, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

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 is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

Biographical / Historical

Mordi Gassner (1899-1995) was a muralist, designer, educator of New York, N.Y. and Drake's Branch, Va.

Scope and Contents

An interview with Mordi Gassner conducted 1982 Apr. 16, by Buck Pennington, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

Gassner speaks of growing up in Brooklyn, NY; attending Parsons Design School (then called New York School of Fine and Applied Art); opening a studio and designing signs for the Strand Theater; walking from El Paso, Texas to Phoenix to improve his eye condition; beginning work in Hollywood and working on set

designs for Douglas Fairbanks and Cecille DeMille; moving back to New York to teach art in a Big Brother program; creating his mural, Mural Monument to Modern Culture; receiving a Guggenheim Fellowship and spending two years in Florence before returning to New York during the Depression; being invited to work back in Hollywood for Disney Studios and with Ernest Schoedsack only to have the films cancel production; his one-man show at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; his involvement with the Artists' Union and the American Artists' Congress; creating Op art during World War I, and later designing visual aids for the armed services during World War II; becoming the art director of ABC [American Broadcasting Corporation]; working later at the Metropolitan Opera as a scenic painter; moving to Drakes Branch, Virginia after his retirement.

System Details

Originally recorded on 2 cassettes.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art, American
Designers -- Virginia -- Drake's Branch -- Interviews
Muralists -- Virginia -- Drake's Branch -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Occupations:

Art teachers -- Virginia -- Drake's Branch -- Interviews