



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Mary Giles

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. 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

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Mary Giles
<b>Date:</b>	2006 July 18
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.giles06
<b>Creator:</b>	Giles, Mary (Interviewee) Sauer, Jane, 1937- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
<b>Extent:</b>	4 Items (Sound recording: 4 sound files (2 hr., 43 min.); digital, wav) 46 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Mary Giles, 2006 July 18, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Mary Giles, 2006 July 18, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

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## 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Mary Giles (1944- ) is an artist of Stillwater, Minnesota. Jane Sauer (1937- ) is an artist and gallery owner of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Mary Giles conducted 2006 July 18, by Jane Sauer, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at the home of Jane Sauer, in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

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## Scope and Contents

Giles speaks of childhood summers spent on Pine Lake in Minnesota; receiving a B.S. in art education from Mankato State University, Minnesota; educational experiences at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts,

Penland School of Crafts, and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts; the influence of nature and Native American art in her work; finding inspiration in "woods and water"; spirituality; teaching elementary art in St. Louis for 28 years while pursuing her art; the materials she works with, including wax linen and various metals; the techniques she uses, such as coiling, twining, torching, hammering, and knotting; the importance of a studio; the appeal of natural aging and corrosion of materials; the competitiveness of craft fields in the United States; attending American Craft Council shows and Sculpture Objects & Functional Art expositions in Chicago; craft as art in the United States; her experience showing in galleries and struggles with pricing; participating in the Poland Triennale in Lodz, Poland, 2001; the pioneering efforts of female fiber artists. Giles also recalls Mary Lee Hu, Diane Itter, Jack Lenor Larsen, Walter Nottingham, Rianna DeRaad, Cynthia Schira, Ferne Jacobs, Barbara Rose Okun, Nancy Kranzberg, Jan Buckman, Harty Shieber, Duane Reed, Agnes Martin, and others.

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## General

Originally recorded 3 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 4 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 43 min.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Decorative arts
- Women artists
- Women sculptors
- Women textile artists

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Names:

- American Crafts Council
- Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts -- Students
- Buckman, Jan
- DeRaad, Rianna
- Haystack Mountain School of Crafts -- Students
- Hu, Mary Lee, 1943-
- Itter, Diane, 1946-1989
- Jacobs, Ferne K. (Ferne Kent), 1942-
- Kranzberg, Nancy
- Larsen, Jack Lenor
- Mankato State University -- Students
- Martin, Agnes, 1912-2004
- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
- Nottingham, Walter, 1930-2012
- Okun, Barbara Rose
- Penland School of Crafts -- Students
- Reed, Duane
- SOFA Chicago
- Schira, Cynthia, 1934-

Shieber, Horty

Occupations:

Fiber artists -- Minnesota

Sculptors -- Minnesota

Places:

Minnesota -- Description and Travel