



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Emmet Gowin

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Emmet Gowin
Date:	2010 May 13-14
Identifier:	AAA.gowin10
Creator:	Gowin, Emmet, 1941- (Interviewee) Goodyear, Frank H., III, 1967- (Interviewer)
Extent:	7 Items (Sound recording, master: 7 memory cards (6 hr., 3 min.); secure digital; 1.25 in.) 81 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .

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.

Restrictions

This interview is access restricted; written permission is required. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Biographical / Historical

Interviewee Emmet Gowin (1941-) is an educator and photographer in Newtown, Pa. Gowin photographed Edith and Rennie Booher and extended family. Interviewer Frank H. Goodyear (1967-) was at the time of the interview the associate curator of photographs with the National Portrait Gallery, in Washington, D.C.

Scope and Contents

Interview of Emmet Gowin, conducted by Frank Goodyear for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution at the Gowins' home in Danville, Virginia, on May 13-14, 2010.

Scope and Contents

Gowin speaks of his upbringing and how he decided to become a Quaker; his relationship with his sister, who had Down Syndrome; growing up in Chincoteague, VA and other Virginia towns; going to business school in Richmond; meeting his wife Edith; transitioning from Richmond Professional Institute to work with Harry Callahan at the Rhode Island School of Design; learning different techniques of printing pictures; studying

with Frederick Sommer; the making and reception of his early family photographs of Edith, the Boohers, and his children; other photographic projects including the Mount St. Helens eruption, photographs in the Middle East, Europe, and South America, nuclear test sites in the western U.S., and his collection of moths; teaching at Princeton University; his attitude toward Postmodernism; how the Light Gallery began; and his artistic influences, including Callahan, Sommer, Robert Frank, Alfred Stieglitz, Walker Evans, Eugène Atget, Hercules Seghers, William Blake, and others. Gowin also recalls Peter Bunnell, Grant Gentry, Fazal Sheikh, Peter McGill, Ralph Eugene Meatyard, Elaine Pagels, and others.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Educators -- New Jersey -- Interviews
Photographers -- Pennsylvania -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings