



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Richard Haas

Funding for this interview was provided by the U.S. General Services Administration, Design Excellence and the Arts. 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.

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Richard Haas
Identifier:	AAA.haas09
Date:	2009 Jan. 13 and Mar. 16
Creator:	Haas, Richard, 1936- (Interviewee) Berman, Avis (Interviewer) United States. General Services Administration. Design Excellence and the Arts Oral History Project
Extent:	1 Item (Sound recording, master: 1 data compact disc (6 hr., 11 min.); digital; 4 WMA files) 133 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Richard Haas, 2009 Jan. 13 and Mar. 16, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Richard Haas, 2009 Jan. 13 and Mar. 16, 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 Archive of American Art's website.

Biographical / Historical

Richard Haas (1936-) is a trompe l'oeil muralist from New York, N.Y. Haas was educated at the University of Wisconsin and University of Minnesota.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Richard Haas conducted 2009 Jan. 13 and Mar. 16, by Avis Berman, for the Archives of American Art's U.S. General Services Administration, Design Excellence and the Arts oral history project, at Haas' studio, in New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

Haas discusses his early interest in architecture; his family connection to Frank Lloyd Wright; attending Taliesin for two summers in 1955 and '56; Meeting Joseph Friebert while an undergraduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; taking studio classes and experimenting with different art styles and techniques; the influence of Abstract Expressionism and Post-Impressionism on his artworks; joining the ROTC program and painting his first mural at Fort Leonard Wood, MO; viewing the murals of Thomas Hart Benton and John Steurt Curry; going to graduate school at the University of Minneapolis, MN and meeting Jack Tworkov and Peter Busa; visiting Mexico on his honeymoon and viewing the murals of "Los Tres Grandes"; teaching art at Michigan State and developing his series, Boxes; the evolution of his art while teaching at Bennington college in Vermont and the shift from architectural drawings into murals; moreover, Haas speaks about the rise of street art in the 1970s and '80s in New York; his first mural at 112 Prince Street; his collaboration with Doris Freeman; the political challenges associated with doing public art; the collaborative process between the artist and architect; the importance of location when choosing a mural and the work's relationship to its environment; furthermore, Haas discusses his GSA projects in Kansas and West Virginia; his other mural commissions, particularly White House Detention Center, 1997; and the impact of technology on the medium. Throughout the conversation, Haas speaks about fellow artists Richard Serra, James Rosinquist, Malcolm Myers, as well as architects Philip Johnson, Grant Marani and Tim Vreeland.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Muralists -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
Trompe l'oeil painting

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

United States. General Services Administration. Design Excellence and the Arts Oral History Project