



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with John Davis Hatch

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with John Davis Hatch
Date:	1979 Aug. 30-1980 Nov. 7
Identifier:	AAA.hatch79
Creator:	Hatch, John Davis (Interviewee) Brown, Robert F. (Interviewer)
Extent:	6 Sound tape reels (Sound recording; 5 in.) 307 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Audio: Oral history interview with John Davis Hatch, 1979 Aug. 30-1980 Nov. 7, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

These interviews are part of the Archives' 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.

Biographical / Historical

John Hatch (1907-1996) was an art historian, collector, art consultant, and museum director.

Scope and Contents

An interview of John Davis Hatch conducted 1979 Aug. 30- 1980 Nov. 7, by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

Hatch recalls his childhood in California and training as a landscape architect, including an apprenticeship with Lockwood de Forest. He discusses his appointment as director of the Gallery of Fine Arts in Seattle at age 21 and his efforts there to develop an Asian focus for the museum and cultivate artists of the region, including Mark Tobey, Dudley Pratt, Kenneth Callahan, Emily Carr, Jose de Creeft, Frederick Varley, and Avarad Fairbanks. He describes his interest in studying museums across the country and abroad and the roles played in the museum scene by the American Federation of Arts and the Museum Directors Association.

Scope and Contents

Hatch recalls his work as assistant director of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and as director of government art projects in New England in the 1930s, when he worked with Edward Bruce, Oscar Bluemner, Charles Woodbury, John Wharf, and Laura Coombs Hills, among others. He describes an attempt to form the American Artists Depository, a precursor to the Archives of American Art, and his activities collecting American drawings, organizing travelling exhibitions, and promoting American art history as a discipline.

Scope and Contents

Hatch speaks of his tenure as director of the Albany Institute of History and Art and his efforts to advance an appreciation of local Dutch history and the work of Thomas Cole. He remembers encounters with Henry Francis Du Pont and Charles Franklin Montgomery. Hatch describes the start of his teaching career in Oregon and his involvement with local artists C.S. Price, Carl Morris, and Ludvik Durchanek. He talks about a stint as director of the Norfolk (Va.) Museum of Arts and Sciences and his work as a consultant to museums, especially as it pertained to the development of arts programs at black colleges in the South.

Scope and Contents

Hatch concludes with a discussion of museums near his home in Lenox, including the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute and the Berkshire Museum.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art -- Collectors and collecting -- Interviews
- Art, American
- Museum directors -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Albany Institute of History and Art
- American Artists Depository
- American Federation of Arts
- Berkshire Museum
- Bluemner, Oscar, 1867-1938
- Bruce, Edward, 1879-1943
- Callahan, Kenneth, 1905-1986
- Carr, Emily, 1871-1945
- De Creeft, José, 1884-1982
- De Forest, Lockwood, 1850-1932
- Du Pont, Henry Francis, 1880-1969
- Durchanek, Ludvik, 1902-

Fairbanks, Avar T. (Avar Tennyson), 1897-1987
Gallery of Fine Arts (Seattle, Wash.)
Hills, Laura Coombs, 1859-1952
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum
Montgomery, Charles Franklin, 1910-
Morris, Carl, 1911-1993
Museum Directors Association
Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences (Va.)
Pratt, Dudley, 1897-1975
Price, C. S. (Clayton S.), 1874-1950
Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute
Tobey, Mark
Varley, Frederick Horsman
Wharf, John
Woodbury, Charles H. (Charles Herbert), 1864-1940

Occupations:

Art historians -- Massachusetts -- Interviews

Functions:

Museums -- United States