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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Willie Herrón

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Collection Overview

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|-------------------------|---|
| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | Oral history interview with Willie Herrón |
| Identifier: | AAA.herron00 |
| Date: | 2000 Feb. 5-Mar. 17 |
| Creator: | Herrón, Willie, 1951- (Interviewee) Rangel, Jeffrey J. (Interviewer) |
| Extent: | 7 Sound cassettes (Sound recording (6 hrs.); analog) 109 Pages (Transcript) |
| Language: | English . |
| Digital Content: | Digital Content: Oral history interview with Willie Herrón, 2000 Feb. 5-Mar. 17, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Willie Herrón, 2000 Feb. 5-Mar. 17, 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. Funding for this interview and transcription provided by the SI Latino Fund of 1997.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Willie Herrón (1951-) is a painter, graphic artist, muralist, and musician from Los Angeles, Calif. Herrón is known as one of the premiere artists and musicians to emerge out of the Chicano arts movement during the 1970s.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Willie Herrón conducted 2000 Feb. 5-Mar. 17, by Jeffrey J. Rangel, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

The interviews took place in a restaurant, City Terrace, East Los Angeles, Calif. Herrón describes his childhood growing up in East Los Angeles, culminating with an extensive discussion of the circumstances surrounding the painting of his most acclaimed mural, "The Wall that Cracked Open" in City Terrace; founding the avant-garde Chicano art group Asco along with Harry Gamboa, Jr., Patssi Valdez, and Gronk; his experience as leader of the band Los Illegals and as a cofounder of the alternative music space Club Vex with Self Help Graphics' Sister Karen Boccalero; the Chicano mural movement, particularly his undertakings in City Terrace, Boyle Heights, and at the Estrada Courts and Ramona Gardens housing projects in East Los Angeles; his commitment to working with at-risk youth and his strong desire to expand the stylistic and iconographic parameters of the medium through the incorporation of graffiti; and an assessment of Asco's role in expanding the continuum of Chicano art and identity.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art and music
- Chicano art movement
- Chicano artists
- Graffiti art
- Latino and Latin American artists
- Mural painting and decoration -- 20th century -- California -- Los Angeles
- Street art

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Asco (Group of artists)
- Gronk, 1954-

Occupations:

- Muralists -- California -- Los Angeles -- Interviews