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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Ferne Jacobs

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Ferne Jacobs
Date:	2005 August 30-31
Identifier:	AAA.jacobs05
Creator:	Jacobs, Ferne K. (Ferne Kent), 1942- (Interviewee) Riedel, Mija, 1958- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	84 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Ferne Jacobs, 2005 August 30-31, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Ferne Jacobs, 2005 August 30-31, 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.

Biographical / Historical

Ferne Jacobs (1942-) is a fiber artist from Los Angeles, California. Mija Riedel (1958-) is a curator and writer from San Francisco, California.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Ferne Jacobs conducted 2005 August 30-31, by Mija Riedel, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at the artist's home and studio, in Los Angeles, California.

Scope and Contents

Jacobs discusses her early childhood in Chicago and her family's move to Los Angeles; her parents' emigration from Europe; her parents' involvement with the Chicago Club in Los Angeles; her earliest experience with art at a Van Gogh exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; her fascination

with drawing at an early age; her first art classes with Ron Blumberg, during her senior year of high school; entering in the Art Center College of Design; getting married and moving to New York; working in the handbag department of Bonwit Teller and taking classes at the Pratt Institute; her later education at various institutions, including California State University in San Diego, Claremont Graduate University, and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine.; her first meeting with Dominic di Mare in San Francisco; her first meeting with Lenore Tawney in New York; her first foray off the loom at the behest of Arline M. Fisch; her first show at Galleria del Sol in Santa Barbara, California; her second show at the Fairtree Gallery in New York where Paul Smith, curator of the Museum of Contemporary Craft (now the Museum of Arts & Design) first saw her work; being included, along with Lenore Tawney, in the First World Craft exhibition in Toronto in 1967; her travels to Cape Cod, where she vacations annually, and to Italy; her aversion to all things technological; her recent experience learning to read the Torah; her work, including Tide (2005), Container for a Wind (1974), and Wind (2004); her interest in Carl Jung; addressing timelessness and duality in her work; various fiber techniques including twining, coiling, and knotting; her relationship with her son Peter and daughter Naomi; her relationship with dealers and galleries, including the Sybaris Gallery and the Snyderman Gallery; and the inspiration for her work that she finds in nature.

Scope and Contents

Jacobs also recalls Gabriel Laderman, Mary Jane Leland, Olga de Amaral, Peter Collingwood, Jack Lenor Larsen, Kay Sekimachi, Joan Austin, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Neda Al-Hilali, Marilyn Pappas, Patsy Krebs, Vija Celmins, Claire Delmar, Ken Price, Ron Nagle, Roland Reese, Fred Tomaselli, Agnes Martin, Francis Sumner Merritt, Joanne Rapp, Nancy Margolis, Kate Anderson, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 4 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 9 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 6 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Decorative arts
- Fiberwork -- Technique
- Women artists
- Women textile artists

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America

Occupations:

- Fiber artists -- California -- Los Angeles