



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Michael John Jerry

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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/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Michael John Jerry
Identifier:	AAA.jerry04
Date:	2004 November 15-16
Creator:	Jerry, Michael John, 1937- (Interviewee) Yager, Jan, 1951- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	159 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Michael John Jerry, 2004 November 15-16, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Michael John Jerry, 2004 November 15-16, 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 available on line

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Michael John Jerry (1937-) is a metalsmith and educator from Santa Fe, N.M. Jan Yager (1951-) is a jeweler and metalsmith from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Michael John Jerry conducted 2004 November 15-16, by Jan Yager, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Santa Fe, N.M.

Scope and Contents

Jerry speaks of his parents' background and their careers as artists and educators; his father, Sylvester Jerry's, work for the WPA; his father's role as director of the Wustum Museum of Fine Arts in Racine, Wisconsin; living at the museum during his childhood; taking art classes at the museum and industrial arts classes in school; doing metalwork in high school; winning the Scholastic Art Award; attending the Rochester Institute of Technology, School of American Craftsmen; working for Ron Pearson at Shop One and Toza Radakovich; attending Cranbrook Academy of Art; finishing his degree back at the School of American Craftsmen; making liturgical pieces on commission; the New England Silver companies; deciding to teach and taking a job at the State University of Wisconsin at Stout; attending the first Society of North American Goldsmiths conference; attending L. Brent Kington's blacksmithing workshop in Carbondale, Illinois; and teaching at Syracuse University. Jerry also speaks of some of his former students and what they are doing now; his teaching philosophy along with teaching partner Barbara Walter; the difficulties of teaching; the formation of SNAG; how industrial design has changed during his career; teaching at summer art schools; why he decided to work with metal; exhibiting his work; pricing his work; living in London and the metalsmith community there; living in Florence, Italy; how traveling has influenced his work; his tools and setup of his studio; the art community in Santa Fe; the process of designing his pieces; making models and drawings; his current project and working process; design influences; collecting ethnic crafts; making jewelry that is wearable; how the craft market has changed during his career; participating in craft fairs; having pieces at galleries and museums; the need for craft criticism and periodicals; the international versus American metal tradition; and current problems with university art programs. Jerry also recalls John Paul Miller, Hans Christensen, Jack Prip, Fred Fenster, Stanley Lechtzin, Robert Ebendorf, Olaf Skoogfors, Michael Monroe, John Marshall, Alex Bealer, Tom Markusen, Bruce Metcalf, Arthur Pulos, Kurt Matzdorf, Philip Morton, Charles Laloma, Henry Moore, and others.

General

Originally recorded as 7 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 12 digital wav files. Duration is 9 hr., 16 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art -- Economic aspects
- Decorative arts
- Metal-work -- Economic aspects
- Metal-work -- Equipment and supplies
- Metal-work -- Study and teaching
- Metal-work -- Technique
- Metal-workers -- New Mexico -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Kington, L. Brent (Louis Brent), 1934-2013
- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America

Society of North American Goldsmiths