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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Bill T. Jones

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Bill T. Jones
Date:	2018 March 23
Identifier:	AAA.jones18
Creator:	Jones, Bill T. (Interviewee) Kitto, Svetlana, 1980- (Interviewer)
Extent:	5 Items (sound files (3 hr., 34 min.) Audio; digital, wav) 59 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Bill T. Jones, 2018 March 23, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Bill T. Jones, 2018 March 23, 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 Archives of American Art's website.

Restrictions

The transcript and recording are open for research. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Biographical / Historical

Bill T. Jones (1952-) is an artist and dancer in New York, New York. Svetlana Kitto (1980-) is a writer and oral historian in Brooklyn, New York.

Scope and Contents

An interview with Bill T. Jones conducted 2018 March 23, by Svetlana Kitto, for the Archives of American Art's Visual Arts and the AIDS Epidemic: An Oral History Project, at Jones' office, New York Live Arts, in New York, New York.

Scope and Contents

Jones speaks of his childhood in the Finger Lakes region; his initial encounter with Arnie Zane; formative family traditions of storytelling and religious expression; the roots of his interest in biography; moving to San Francisco with Zane to join American Dance Asylum; returning to New York and auditioning for Clark Center Festival; his body of duet works with Zane; Zane's AIDS-related death in 1988; the role of questions and personal experience in his process of art-making; changes in LGBTQ attitudes and expression since the 1980s; the effect of Zane's death on his life and career; his appreciation of personal style and reaction to being labeled queer or punk in retrospect; working with many different individuals and communities on Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land; his exploration of mortality and disease in Still/Here; his subsequent body of work and its animating interests; his leadership of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company and New York Live Arts; major honors he has received; his ongoing effort to honor Zane's legacy; and his sense of his future in the dance world. Jones also recalls Richard Bull, Lois Welk, Louise Roberts, Bill Katz, Robert Longo, Harvey Lichtenstein, Seán Curran, Laura Dean, Merce Cunningham, David Vaughan, John Cage, John Cowles, Sage Cowles, Sunny Dupree, Arlene Croce, Demian Acquavella, Liz McComb, Cynthia Mayeda, Garland Wright, Kim Cullen, Steven Hendel, Oprah Winfrey, Barack Obama, Janet Wong, and others.

System Details

Recorded on Tascam DR-100MKII R000329.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Artists -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
Dancers -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Visual Arts and the AIDS Epidemic: An Oral History Project