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Oral history interview with William Keyser, Jr

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with William Keyser, Jr
Identifier:	AAA.keyser03
Date:	2003 April 25-May 2
Extent:	107 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	Keyser, William A., Jr. (William Alphonse), 1936- Cooke, Edward S., 1954- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Language:	English

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

William Keyser, Jr. (1936-) is a woodworker from Victor, N.Y. Edward S. Cooke, Jr. is a professor.

Scope and Contents

An interview of William Kesyer Jr. conducted 2003 April 25 and May 2, by Edward S. Cooke Jr., for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Victor, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

Keyser describes his childhood, including his early interest in construction through his father's home wood shop and the Soap Box Derbies of the 1950s; his participation in the Fisher Body Division automobile design competition and science fairs in high school; studying engineering and sculpture at Carnegie Mellon University; working at Hoover Vacuum Cleaner Company; his studies at Kent State University and the School of American Craftsmen at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT); his teaching positions at RIT and Ohio University; the curriculum he established at RIT and the goals and structure of the woodworking program; he discusses moving away from teaching in the 1990s; the advantages and disadvantages of commissions; his liturgical and speculative work; the influence of furniture and art movements on his furniture; the importance of his family and his Catholic faith; the benefits of university involvement and summer arts programs; his travels in New England and Scandinavia; being well received as a regional artist; the importance of publications in furniture and art; four objects that were terminal points in his career; and the future of woodworking. He also recalls Mel Someroski, Tage Frid, Michael Harms, Jere Osgood, Wendell Castle, James Krenov, Craig McArt, Doug Sigler, Daniel Jackson, Robert Johnston, Lamar White, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 6 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 10 digital wav files. Duration is 5 hr., 55 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Coaster cars
- Decorative arts
- Furniture making
- Woodworkers -- New York (State) -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Carnegie Institute of Technology (Carnegie Mellon Univ.) -- Students
- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
- Rochester Institute of Technology -- Faculty