



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Silas Kopf

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Silas Kopf
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.kopf04
<b>Date:</b>	2004 October 1
<b>Creator:</b>	Kopf, Silas (Interviewee) Cooke, Edward S., 1954- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
<b>Extent:</b>	60 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Silas Kopf, 2004 October 1, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Silas Kopf, 2004 October 1, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

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## 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Silas Kopf (1949- ) is a woodworker and furniture maker from Northampton, Massachusetts. Edward S. Cooke, Jr., is an art historian and professor in New Haven, Connecticut.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Silas Kopf conducted 2004 October 1, 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 Northampton, Massachusetts.

## Scope and Contents

Kopf speaks of growing up in Warren, Pennsylvania.; being interested in drawing as a child; getting a degree in architecture at Princeton University; visiting Richard Newman at his studio; moving to Rochester and taking classes in woodworking; working for Wendell Castle's studio and the projects they worked on at the time; trying to find his own style and deciding to make marquetry furniture; setting up his own shop; his early influences; moving to Easthampton; working at the Leeds Design Workshop; selling his early works in galleries; traveling to Italy to look at Renaissance intarsia panels; exploring portraiture and trompe l'oeil styles; choosing furniture designs; hiring assistants; taking part in the Woodworker's Alliance for Rainforest Protection; pricing his work; working on commission; and teaching workshops. Kopf also speaks of his favorite furniture pieces; participating in exhibitions; how the market and interest in studio furniture has changed; and visiting France on a fellowship. Kopf recalls George Nakashima, Stephen Proctor, James Krenov, and others.

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## General

Originally recorded on 3 compact discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 4 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 54 min.

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## 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
- Furniture designers -- Massachusetts -- Interviews
- Furniture making -- Technique
- Woodworkers -- Massachusetts -- Interviews

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Names:

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