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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Earl Krentzin

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
General.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Earl Krentzin
Identifier:	AAA.krentz02
Date:	2002 August 30-31
Creator:	Krentzin, Earl, 1929- (Interviewee) Yager, Jan, 1951- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	48 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Earl Krentzin, 2002 August 30-31, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Earl Krentzin, 2002 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.

Available Formats

Transcript available online.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Earl Krentzin (1929-) is a metalsmith from Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan. Jan Yager is an artist from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Earl Krentzin conducted 2002 August 30-31, by Jan Yager, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan.

Scope and Contents

Krentzin speaks of his family and childhood; the education he received in Detroit, Michigan; attending Wayne State University then Cranbrook Academy of Art; deciding to major in metalwork; being exposed to Dick Thomas at Cranbrook; meeting his wife, Lorraine Wolstein at Wayne; their son Alexander; receiving a Fulbright in 1957 and 1958 and traveling to the Royal College of Art in London; visiting the museums in England and traveling throughout Europe during their time abroad; the different places he has lived in the United States; winning the Founder' Prize at the Michigan Craft Show as well as the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award; the different types of things that he and his wife collect; a gallery manager named Margaret Conzelman; Lawrence Fleischman and his insistence on Krentzin having a show in New York; the James Graham & Sons Gallery and Kennedy Gallery; and the "Young Americans Show" at the American Craft Museum and "Fiber, Clay and Metal" in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Scope and Contents

He also discusses, his interest in the English magazine, "Country Life;" flea markets in the Detroit area; trades and barter with fellow artists; the 1964 World Crafts Conference at Columbia University, organized by Stanley Lechtzin; the Michigan Silversmiths Guild; the Henry Ford Museum and Detroit Historical Society; how his process has remained the same and his pieces have only gotten a little bit larger; the commission for the Westland Shopping Center in Westland, Michigan; the jewelry he creates; the little figures, he calls "creatures," in his work; Larry Fleischman and his Krentzin collection; the important encouragement from his wife Lorraine; the significance of university training, and his disapproval of students immediately attending RISD or Cranbrook after high school; his fascination with Medieval European metalwork, Japanese metalwork, and the Bauhaus as well; the Archives of American Art and its beginnings in Detroit; he concludes with a discussion about natural objects, such as ivory or exotic woods, and the debate of their usage, then and now. Krentzin also recalls Robert Eaton, Dick Thomas, Lillian Wallick Elliott, Karl Fox, Mike Vizzini, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 3 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 10 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hrs., 54 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Decorative arts
Metal-work -- Study and teaching -- Michigan
Metal-workers -- Michigan -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Cranbrook Academy of Art -- Students
Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America

Wayne State University -- Students