



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Val Laigo

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Val Laigo
<b>Date:</b>	1989 July 12
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.laigo89
<b>Creator:</b>	Laigo, Val M., 1930-1992 (Interviewee) Nakane, Kazuko (Interviewer) Lau, Alan Chong (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	42 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Val Laigo, 1989 July 12, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Val Laigo, 1989 July 12, 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.

### Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

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## Biographical / Historical

Val Laigo (1930-1992) was a Filipino American painter based in Seattle, Washington. Val Laigo was born in Naguilian, La Union, in the Phillipines. His family moved to the United States in 1931 and to Seattle in 1941. Laigo's full name Valeriano Emerenciano Montante Laigo.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Val Laigo conducted 1989 July 12, by Alan Lau and Kazuko Nakane, for the Archives of American Art Northwest Asian American Project, in Laigo's home, Seattle, Wash.

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## Scope and Contents

Laigo speaks of learning how to paint at age eleven with watercolors; growing up with a heart condition known as Eisenmenger's Complex; teaching at Highline High School and creating a wolverine as the school's mascot; the inclusion of his life story in a Filipino oral history project; singing for an orchestra called the Gentlemen of Rhythm, at the Filipino Catholic Youth Activities events and other venues; Doug Bennett as an influence in composition and design; being a student at Seattle University and joining Art Equity in approximately 1951; remembering his painting, "Madonna" being shown at the Seattle Art Museum; his first show at the People's Furniture Store and later with Fay Chong at the Hathaway House; Zoe Dusanne became his agent; his introduction to the MacPaint software program and his first piece of computer art; his desire to study Mexican muralists, Diego Rivera, Jose Orozco, David Siqueiros, and Rufino Tamayo and becoming a student at Mexico City College; his life in Mexico with the woman who would become his wife; the strong influence of Nick Damascus on his painting; how his palette changed to brighter colors after living in Mexico; his health crisis there that led him to abandon his work towards a master's degree and return to Seattle in 1959; having to start over from the beginning at the University of Washington; Tommy Kwazume hiring him at Boing as an artist in 1960; Lee Nordness and the RCA Victor album cover; his negative experience with Margaret Reed while showing at the Panaca Gallery; his exhibit at the Frye Art Museum in 1969 and criticism by Clark Voorhees; his Mexican experience having influenced his vigor and scale; the Lost Generation series; his comment about Picasso not being able to paint; encouragement from his family to pursue art training; the murder of his father in 1936; his mother's success as a new painter; and his work, "Dilemma of the Atom" featured on the cover of an RCA Victor record album. Laigo also recalls Perry Acker, Foster White Gallery, David Mendoza, Fred Mendoza, Tom Tooley, Ray Sadirius, Quincy Jones, Oscar Holden's Orchestra, Fred Cordova, Mits Katayama, Rudy Bundis, Kal Chin, Paul Horiuchi, James Washington, Dick Kirsten, Frank Okada, John Matsudaira, Walter Froelich, Bill Ritchie, John Counts, Don Fenton, Kenneth Callahan, Fred Run, Barry Ferrell, Ken Harms, Andrew Chin, Ben Dar, Ruth Mora, and others.

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## General

Originally recorded on 2 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 3 digital wav files. Duration is 1 hr., 48 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:

- Asian American art
- Asian American artists
- Asian American muralists
- Asian American painters
- Computer Art
- Filipino American art
- Filipino American artists
- Muralists -- Mexico

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

Bennett, Doug  
Callahan, Kenneth, 1905-1986  
Charles and Emma Frye Art Museum  
Chong, Fay  
Dusanne, Zoe, 1884-1977  
Foster/White Gallery  
Horiuchi, Paul, 1906-  
Jones, Quincy, 1933-  
Katayama, Mits  
Mexico City College -- Students  
Nordness, Lee  
Northwest Asian American Project  
Okada, Frank S. (Frank Sumio), 1931-2000  
Orozco, José Clemente, 1883-1949  
Picasso, Pablo, 1881-1973  
Ritchie, Bill  
Rivera, Diego, 1886-1957  
Seattle University -- Students  
Siqueiros, David Alfaro  
Tamayo, Rufino, 1899-  
University of Washington -- Students  
Voorhees, Clark G. (Clark Greenwood), 1871-1933  
Washington, James W., 1911-2000

Occupations:

Painters -- Washington (State) -- Seattle