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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Jack Lenor Larsen

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Jack Lenor Larsen
Date:	2004 February 6-8
Identifier:	AAA.larsen04
Creator:	Larsen, Jack Lenor (Interviewee) Fisch, Arline M. (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	78 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Jack Lenor Larsen, 2004 February 6-8, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Jack Lenor Larsen, 2004 February 6-8, 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 on line

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Jack Lenor Larsen (1927-2020) was a weaver and textile designer from East Hampton, N.Y. Arline M. Fisch (1931-) is a jeweler from San Diego, California.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Jack Lenor Larsen conducted 2004 February 6-8, by Arline M. Fisch, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Longhouse, East Hampton, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

Larsen speaks of his childhood in Seattle, Washington; his parents and other adults who had a positive impact on his development; building things with his friends; attending the University of Washington to study architecture and deciding to study textiles instead; visiting Dorothy Liebes's textile studio; leaving school and moving to Los Angeles; attending the University of Southern California and eventually returning to the University of Washington; becoming a teaching assistant to Ed Rossbach; getting a Masters degree at Cranbrook Academy of Art; meeting many influential people in San Francisco and New York; moving to New York and setting up a studio; working on commission for several companies including Thaibok; expanding his offices to include larger looms and a showroom; setting up a branch of production in Haiti; working in the fashion industry and designing home decor; and working in Southeast Asia developing handcrafted woven exports. He also speaks of his involvement with the American Craft Council and the World Crafts Council, re-organizing and building the new campus at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts; traveling to Central Asia, Africa, Europe, and his desire to travel more; working and exhibiting in Japan; experiencing the Japanese textile industry; writing numerous books on fiber arts including, "The Dyer's Art," often collaborating with other fiber artists; developing a classification system for interlacing; collecting art; gardening and its relation to art and design; building Round House and the inspiration behind it; building LongHouse using the Japanese Ise Shrine as a model and plans for further expansion; retiring and difficulties writing, "A Weaver's Memoir." Larsen also recalls Dorothy Liebes, Marianne Strengell, Florence Knoll, Edgar Kaufman, Ed Rossbach, Toshiko Takaezu, Francis Merritt, Mary Bishop, Garth Clark, Issey Miyake, Mildred Constantine, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 7 sound discs and 1 sound cassette. Reformatted in 2010 as 19 digital wav files. Duration is 6 hrs., 23 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Decorative arts
- Textile crafts
- Textile industry -- Japan

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Adamson, Glenn
- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
- Rossbach, Ed
- University of Washington -- Students

Occupations:

- Textile designers -- New York (State) -- New York