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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Harold Lehman

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Harold Lehman
Identifier:	AAA.lehman97
Date:	1997 Mar. 28
Creator:	Lehman, Harold, 1913-2006 Polcari, Stephen (Interviewer)
Extent:	144 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Harold Lehman, 1997 Mar. 28, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Harold Lehman, 1997 Mar. 28, 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.

Biographical / Historical

Harold Lehman (1913-2006) was a painter, lithographer, designer, and sculptor from New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Harold Lehman conducted 1997 Mar. 28, by Stephen Polcari, for the Archives of American Art. Lehman speaks of his early educational and artistic experiences in New York; taking sculpture classes; moving to California; going to school at Manual Arts; going to Ojai and learning the religious philosophy of Krishnamurti; participating in literary discussion groups and the books he read; his years at Otis Art Institute; working with Sisqueiros, and how the frescoes they created were destroyed by the Red Squad; when he became interested in painting; working with Lorser Feitelson; working with the Public Works of Art Project; moving back to New York and working with the Federal Arts Project; his experiences with Sisqueiros and the artist workshop they set up; his thoughts on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Stalin and Trotsky; his thoughts on social realism; the project he did on Rikers Island; doing mural art; breaking both his arms two months before the attack on Pearl Harbor and how he managed to stay out of the army; working on his mural in Woodstock; working on war bond painting for the government; his art work during the war years; recollections of Jackson Pollack and his interest in Indian Art; going to see the Picasso show; his artistic influences; his thoughts on America's involvement in World War II; his life after the war and what inspired him; his memories

of Phil Guston; thoughts on Harold Rosenberg and Clement Greenberg; his life after the war, and other recollections about his life and friends. He recalls Max Maikowski, Jean de Laffiere, Rutolo, Frederick J. Schwankovsky, Phil Guston, Jackson Pollack, Manuel Tolegian, Rueben Kadish, George Stanley, Roger Noble Vernon, D.A. Siqueiros, Luis Arenal, Lorser Feitelson, Helen Lundberg, Leo Katz, Merle Armiduke, Stanley McCoy, Axel Horr (Horn), Carla Mahl (Clara Moore), Louie Serstadt, Diego Rivera, Jose Orozco, Arnold Blanch, Harold Rosenberg, Clement Greenberg, Arnold Blanch, and many others.

General

Originally recorded on 7 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 12 digital wav files. Duration is 8 hrs., 39 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Communism
- Mural painting and decoration
- Painters -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Social realism
- World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Arenal, Luis
- Armiduke, Merle
- Blanch, Arnold, 1896-1968
- Feitelson, Lorser, 1898-1978
- Greenberg, Clement, 1909-1994
- Guston, Philip, 1913-1980
- Horr, Axel
- Kadish, Reuben, 1913-1992
- Katz, Leo, 1887-1982
- Lundeberg, Helen, 1908-1999
- Mahl, Carla
- Maikowski, Max
- McCoy, Stanley
- Orozco, José Clemente, 1883-1949
- Pollock, Jackson, 1912-1956
- Public Works of Art Project
- Rivera, Diego, 1886-1957
- Rosenberg, Harold, 1906-1978
- Schwankovsky, Frederick John, 1885-1974
- Serstadt, Louie
- Siqueiros, David Alfaro

Stanley, George M., 1903-
de Laffiere, Jean