



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Abram Lerner

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Abram Lerner
Identifier:	AAA.lerner75
Date:	1975 Dec. 9-1976 Jan. 27
Creator:	Lerner, Abram (Interviewee) Cummings, Paul (Interviewer) Diller, Burgoyne, 1906-1965
Extent:	179 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Audio: Oral history interview with Abram Lerner, 1975 Dec. 9-1976 Jan. 27, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

These interviews are part of the Archives' 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 others.

Biographical / Historical

Abram Lerner (1913-2007) was a museum director in Washington, D.C.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Abram Lerner conducted 1975 Dec. 9-1976 Jan. 27, by Paul Cummings, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

Lerner speaks of his childhood and youth in New York City; his education; going to museums and developing an interest in art; his painting career; getting on the WPA mural project; artists' unions and their importance; the gallery scene in New York City in the 1930s; going to work at the A.C.A. Gallery; meeting Joseph Hirshhorn, becoming friends and going to work for him; Hirshhorn's style of collecting; vainly trying to keep track of Hirshhorn's acquisitions; early exhibitions of Hirshhorn's collection, and their effect on the art market; Hirshhorn's involvement with the Smithsonian Institution and the beginning of the Hirshhorn Museum; the development of the Museum and its interaction with the Smithsonian; early exhibitions there; problems of museum administration and security; public response to the Hirshhorn Museum.

Scope and Contents

Lerner recalls Philip Evergood, Burgoyne Diller, Max Weber, and Douglas MacAgy.

General

Originally recorded on 3 sound tape reels. Reformatted in 2010 as 6 digital wav files. Duration is 5 hrs., 36 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Collectors and collecting -- New York (State) -- New York
Art -- Collectors and collecting -- Washington (D.C.)

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Dlugoszewski, Lucia, 1931-2000
Evergood, Philip, 1901-1973
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Hirshhorn, Joseph H.
MacAgy, Douglas, 1913-
Weber, Max, 1881-1961

Occupations:

Art museum directors -- Washington (D.C.)