



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Robert Levin

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Robert Levin
Date:	2004 December 11
Identifier:	AAA.levin04
Creator:	Levin, Robert, 1948- (Interviewee) Byrd, Joan Falconer (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	32 Pages (Transcript) 3 Items (Sound recordings: 3 sound files (3 hr., 14 min.); digital, wav)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Robert Levin, 2004 December 11, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Robert Levin, 2004 December 11, 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

Robert Levin (1948-) is a glass artist from Burnsville, North Carolina. Joan Falconer Byrd (1939-) is a professor in the art department, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Robert Levin conducted 2004 December 11, by Joan Byrd, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Burnsville, North Carolina.

Scope and Contents

Levin speaks of growing up in Dundalk, Maryland; participating in theater in high school; attending Denison University; becoming interested in ceramics and glass; attending graduate school at Southern Illinois

University; working as an assistant to Fritz Dreisbach at Pilchuck Glass School; teaching at Penland School of Crafts; becoming resident glass artist at Penland; influential artists; moving to Celo; the North Carolina craft community; the element of play in his work; mixing glass colors; keeping variety in his work; the process of making sculptural and functional pieces; the influence of nature and other cultures on his work; including political and social statements in his work; making mixed-media pieces; working on commission; making Judaica pieces; the glass blowing process; being part of an international glass tradition; participating in the Glass Art Society; the reasons he enjoys teaching; attending GAS conferences; participating in regional art organizations; his home studio and the equipment he uses; how his working process has changed; designing a series of awards; his interest in music and guitar; the qualities of glass; and the importance of intuitiveness in creating his pieces. Levin also recalls Audrey Handler, Bill Boysen, Bill Brown, Richard Ritter, Bill Bernstein, Mark Peiser, Harvey Littleton, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 3 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 3 digital wav files. Duration is 3 hr., 14 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art -- North Carolina
- Decorative arts
- Glass art
- Glass artists -- North Carolina -- Interviews
- Jewish art

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Bernstein, William, 1945-
- Brown, William J. (William Joseph), 1923-1992
- Denison University -- Students
- Dreisbach, Fritz
- Glass Art Society
- Handler, Audrey
- Levin, Robert, 1948-
- Littleton, Harvey K.
- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
- Peiser, Mark, 1938-
- Penland School of Crafts -- Faculty
- Pilchuck School -- Students
- Ritter, Richard Q.
- Southern Illinois University (System) -- Students

Functions:

- Artists' studios