



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Cheech Marin

Funding for this interview was provided by Barbara Fleischman.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Cheech Marin
<b>Date:</b>	2017 October 16-17
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.marin17
<b>Creator:</b>	Marin, Cheech (Interviewee) Franco, Josh T. (1985-) (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	7 Items (sound files (3 hr., 27 min.) Audio; digital, wav) 141 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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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

This interview is access restricted; written permission is required. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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## Biographical / Historical

Cheech Marin (1946- ) is an actor, writer, director, and art collector in Pacific Palisades, California.

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## Biographical / Historical

Josh T. Franco (1985- ) is the National Collector, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

## Scope and Contents

An interview with Cheech Marin conducted 2017 October 17-18, by Josh T. Franco, for the Archives of American Art and the Center for the History of Collecting in America at the Frick Art Reference Library of The Frick Collection, at Marin's home, in Pacific Palisades, California.

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## Scope and Contents

Mr. Marin discusses growing up as a young Chicano in South Central Los Angeles and Granada Hills, California, and his early exposure to the liturgical art of the Catholic Church; his family's use of altars in their homes; his cousins and their independent studies as schoolchildren and his particular focus on art history and classical music; the discouragement by a teacher at a young age to pursue doing art work himself; his early collections of sports memorabilia and ephemera; his wife Natasha Rubin, the pianist, and his former wife Patti Heid, the painter, and his children; his initial interests in Chicano art and the beginnings of his art collecting in this field; the concept of rasquache, especially how it applies to Chicano art; the paintings of Carlos Almaraz; his time working with clay and pottery in college, and as an assistant to the ceramist Ed Drahanchuk. Mr. Marin also describes the work being done to create The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art, Culture and Industry in Riverside, California; the importance of the early centers around the country for Chicano art, including Corpus Christi and San Antonio, Texas; his work in film and television; his comedy partner Tommy Chong's interest in New Guinea art; his lecture tours about Chicano art; his assistant Melissa Richardson Banks; the organization of the touring exhibition Chicano Visions [2001-2007]; the potential of Riverside, California as a new mecca for art; the club scene in Hollywood, California in the '70s; his time living in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania and his exposure to the equestrian world; and the salons he and his wife Natasha have conducted in their home as a way to create interaction between Chicano artists and classical musicians. Mr. Marin also recalls Vincent Valdez; Steve Martin; Paul Thiebaud; George Yepes; Robert Berman; Alice Walton; Adán Hernández; Sonya Fe, as well as Stacy King; Belkis Ayón; John Russo; and Luis and Daniel Valdez, among others.

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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:

- Actors -- California -- Interviews
- Art -- Collectors and collecting -- California -- Interviews
- Authors -- California -- Interviews
- Motion picture producers and directors -- California -- Interviews

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Names:

Art Collectors: A Project in Partnership with the Center for the History of Collecting in America at The Frick Collection