



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Steve Martin

Funding for this interview was provided by Barbara Fleischman.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Steve Martin
Date:	2013 February 4-5
Identifier:	AAA.martin13
Creator:	Martin, Steve, 1945- (Interviewee) McElhinney, James Lancel, 1952- (Interviewer)
Extent:	77 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .

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.

Biographical / Historical

Interviewee Steve Martin (1945-) is an art collector, comedian, actor, musician, and author in Beverly Hills, Calif. Interviewer James McElhinney (1952-) is a painter and educator of New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An oral history interview with Steve Martin conducted 2013 February 4-5, by James McElhinney, 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 Martin's home, in Beverly Hills, California.

Scope and Contents

Martin speaks about his first encounters with art while majoring in philosophy at California State University, Long Beach; the significance of dining at Dalton Trumbo's home with luminaries of the artistic community; how the cost of the up-and-comers of the 1960s has changed since he bought his first print; his perception of art in the 1960s, coinciding with Warhol's eminence; having an art show at the Molly Barnes Gallery called Invisible Art, which he has not discussed since; learning to buy valuable art using the catalogue raisonné; studying American art in college libraries and museums while touring the country as a comedian;

his transition from aspiring aesthete to collector of art; his philosophy of collecting, from coins to art; his thoughts on taking custody of paintings; envying other collections as the dark side of collecting; the validity of the artist's statement; trying to describe a painting; notoriety of American artists abroad; seeking an emotional response to art; reading a painting; and the difference between his past and current collecting styles. Martin also recalls Melissa Trumbo, Dalton Trumbo, Phil Carey, Armand Duvantes [sp], Terry Delapp, Gerald Peters, Anne Martin, Eric Fischl, April Gornik, Victoria Dailey and others.

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 -- California -- Beverly Hills -- 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