



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Carolyn Mazloomi

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Carolyn Mazloomi
Identifier:	AAA.mazloo02
Date:	2002 September 17-30
Extent:	16 Items (Sound recording: 16 sound files (4 hr., 33 min.); digital, wav) 56 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	Mazloomi, Carolyn Cubbs, Joanne Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
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.

Available Formats

Transcript available online.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Carolyn Mazloomi (1948-) is a quilt maker from West Chester, Ohio.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Carolyn Mazloomi conducted 2002 September 17 and 30, by Joanne Cubbs, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in West Chester, Ohio. Mazloomi speaks of growing up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with a family of self-taught artists; the positive influence of her aunt and teacher Dr. Carter; the generation of African American quilt-makers who followed a gap in quilt-making post-slavery; she describes her

previous career as an aeronautical engineer and her transition to quilt-making; how she identifies herself as a craftsperson, not an artist; her experience with Baltimore album and Appalachian quilts; learning to quilt; the Women of Color Quilter's Network and its economic and social development programs; her book, "Spirits of the Cloth"; the positive and negative aspects of travel; the false generalizations of African American quilts in academic circles; the importance of gender, race, and ethnicity in her work; her connection to "praise songs"; she discusses functional vs. nonfunctional quilts; the market for "hand-crafted" quilts; agents and galleries; she describes her working environment; adopting the use of a sewing machine in her work; the importance of community; her technique; her accomplishment of placing African-American quilts in the Renwick Gallery; the influence of magazines, including "Raw Vision;" her aversion to commissions; expanding her use of materials and technology; her exhibitions; her role as an advocate and dealer; finding inspiration in black and white linocuts and her use of color in quilts; and making a connection with her audience. Mazloomi also recalls Marie Wilson, Cuesta Benberry, Edjohnetta Miller, Roland Freeman, Robert Cargo, Martha Connell, Penny Sisto, Minnie Adkins, Nkosi Johnson, and Lauryn Hill.

General

Originally recorded on 4 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 16 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hrs., 33 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- African American artists
- African American quiltmakers
- Baltimore album quilts
- Decorative arts
- Quilting -- Study and teaching
- Quilting -- Technique
- Women artists

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Adkins, Minnie, 1934-
- Benberry, Cuesta
- Cargo, Robert T.
- Connell, Martha Stamm
- Freeman, Roland L., 1936-
- Hill, Lauryn
- Johnson, Nkosi, 1989-2001
- Miller, Edjohnetta
- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
- Sisto, Penny
- Wilson, Marie

Women of Colour Quilters Network

Occupations:

Quiltmakers -- Ohio