



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with George McNeil

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with George McNeil
Identifier:	AAA.mcneil65
Date:	1965 June 3
Extent:	18 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	McNeil, George, 1908-1995 Seckler, Dorothy Gees, 1910-1994 Diller, Burgoyne, 1906-1965
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This interview is 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.

Restrictions

Transcript is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

Biographical / Historical

George McNeil (1908-1995) was a painter and a printmaker in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An interview of George McNeil conducted by Dorothy Seckler for the Archives of American Art. McNeil speaks of his childhood and his family; becoming interested in art during high school; attending Pratt Institute, and not being satisfied there; deciding to drop out of Pratt after attending a lecture from Vaclav Vytlacil; going to the Metropolitan Museum every day drawing and analyzing paintings; meeting Arshile Gorky while at the Metropolitan Museum; attending the Art Students League; studying with Hans Hofmann; the start of the American Abstract Artists; his involvement in the WPA's mural project; attending Teachers College at Columbia before joining the Navy; re-entering the New York art scene during the forties and liking it very much; meeting and being influenced by Pollock; his views on the state of painting; how his work has evolved; the various stages in the way a painting developed for him; how The Club and the Eighth Street Club has influenced him; the ideas discussed at The Club, and how he feels surrealism was not a big influence on them; Jackson Pollock's influence on abstract expressionism; artists

he admires or has admired; and his thoughts on the contemporary art scene. He recalls Vaclav Vytlačil, Arshile Gorky, Jan Matulka, David Smith, Dorothy Dehner, Edgar Levy, Leo Manso, Burgoyne Diller, Irene Rice Pereira, Hans Hofmann, Jo Hopper, Giorgio Cavallon, Linda Lindaberg (Cavallon), Mercedes Kahls, George Byron Brown, Albert Swinden, Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollack, Franz Kline, Jack Tworckov, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, and many others.

General

Originally recorded on 2 sound tapes. Reformatted in 2010 as 4 digital wav files. Duration is 1 hr., 49 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Abstract expressionism
- Art, American
- Mural painting and decoration
- Painters -- New York (State) -- Interviews
- Painting
- Printmakers -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Surrealism

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- American Abstract Artists
- Art Students League (New York, N.Y.) -- Students
- Cavallon, Giorgio, 1904-1989
- De Kooning, Willem, 1904-1997
- Dehner, Dorothy, 1901-1994
- Dlugoszewski, Lucia, 1931-2000
- Gorky, Arshile, 1904-1948
- Hofmann, Hans, 1880-1966
- Hopper, Jo N. (Josephine Nivison), 1883-1968
- Kline, Franz, 1910-1962
- Levy, Edgar
- Manso, Leo
- Matulka, Jan, 1890-1972
- Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.)
- Pereira, I. Rice (Irene Rice), 1902-1971
- Pollock, Jackson, 1912-1956
- Pratt Institute. Art School -- Students
- Reinhardt, Ad, 1913-1967
- Rothko, Mark, 1903-1970
- Smith, David, 1906-1965
- Tworckov, Jack

United States. Work Projects Administration
Vytlačil, Vaclav, 1892-1984