



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with James Melchert

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with James Melchert
Identifier:	AAA.melche91
Date:	1991 Apr. 4-5
Extent:	90 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	Melchert, Jim, 1930- Jones, Mady
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. Funding for this interview provided by the Lannan Foundation.

Restrictions

ACCESS RESTRICTED; use requires written permission.

Biographical / Historical

Jim Melchert (1930-) is a sculptor, teacher, and art administrator of Oakland, Calif. Chairman, Ceramics Dept., San Francisco Art Institute, 1961-1964. Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, 1965-1976. Federal grants chairman of the visual arts for the National Endowment of the Arts in the late 1970s.

Scope and Contents

An interview of James Melchert conducted in Oakland, Calif., 1991 Apr.4-5, by Mady Jones, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

Melchert discusses his background; attending the University of Chicago for his MFA in painting; discovering his interest in clay; studying under Peter Voulkos at the Bray Foundation and following him to Berkeley in the Decorative Arts Dept.; artists at Berkeley at the time; teaching ceramics at the San Francisco Art Institute; the art scene in San Francisco; working for the National Endowment for the Arts; moving to Rome to work for the American Academy in Rome; and his future plans. Among the many artists and administrators he recalls are Rudy Autio, Millard Sheets, Bob Arneson, Stephen de Staebler, Jacques Schnier, Peter Selz, Bruce Connor, Bruce Nauman, Manuel Neri, Joan Brown, Susan Peterson, Fred Martin, Ron Nagle, Grace Morley, and Carlos Villa.

General

Originally recorded on 5 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 9 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hrs., 38 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art, Modern -- 20th century -- California -- San Francisco Bay Area
Arts administrators -- California -- Interviews
Ceramics
Decorative arts
Sculptors -- California -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

American Academy in Rome
National Endowment for the Arts
San Francisco Art Institute -- Faculty
University of California, Berkeley -- Faculty
Voulkos, Peter, 1924-2002

Occupations:

Artists -- California -- San Francisco Bay Area