



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Thomas M. Messer

Archives of American Art
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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
General.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	1
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Thomas M. Messer
Identifier:	AAA.messer70
Date:	1970 Sept. 22
Creator:	Messer, Thomas M. (Interviewee) Cummings, Paul (Interviewer)
Extent:	35 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Audio: Oral history interview with Thomas M. Messer, 1970 Sept. 22, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

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.

Available Formats

Transcript: 35mm microfilm reel 3417 available at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Restrictions

Transcript: Patrons must use microfilm copy.

Biographical / Historical

Thomas M. Messer (1919-) is a museum director from New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Thomas M. Messer conducted 1970 Sept. 22, by Paul Cummings, for the Archives of American Art. Messer speaks of his childhood in Czechoslovakia; his early interest in art and music; coming to the United States; his education at Boston University; directing a museum, in Roswell, N.M., for three years; going to the American Federation of Arts and becoming director there; moving on to the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston; the development of his interest in Latin American art and culture; becoming the director of the Guggenheim Museum; his philosophy on museum acquisitions; the current art market; what makes exhibitions successful or unsuccessful; and the future of museums.

General

Originally recorded on 1 sound tape reel. Reformatted in 2010 as 2 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hrs., 9 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art museum directors -- United States -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

American Federation of Arts
Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston, Mass.)
Roswell Museum
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Functions:

Art museums -- United States