



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Thomas M. Messer

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Thomas M. Messer
Identifier:	AAA.messer94
Date:	1994 Oct.-1995 Jan
Extent:	83 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	Messer, Thomas M. Decker, Andrew
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.

Biographical / Historical

Thomas M. Messer (1920-) is a museum director in New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Thomas M. Messer conducted 1994 Oct.-1995 Jan., by Andrew Decker, for the Archives of American Art, at the Americas Society, New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

Messer speaks about his youth in pre-World War II Czechoslovakia, his directorship of the American Federation of Arts; the Roswell Museum in Roswell, N.M.; the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston; and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. He discusses his collecting interests in connection with the development of the Guggenheim, particularly Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky; his working relationship with Harry, Peter, and Peggy Guggenheim; numerous exhibitions; and the acquisitions of several major collections. Finally, he comments on post-retirement projects, particularly at the National Gallery of Prague.

General

Originally recorded on 7 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 12 digital wav files. Duration is 7 hrs., 23 min.

General

End of interview session Jan. 24, 1995 (Tape 6, side B) not recorded due to equipment malfunction.

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
Guggenheim, Harry Frank, 1890-1971
Guggenheim, Peggy, 1898-
Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston, Mass.)
Kandinsky, Wassily, 1866-1944
Klee, Paul, 1879-1940
Národní galerie v Praze
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum