



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Museum of Contemporary Art Interviews, 1979-1986, in the Archives of American Art

Megan McShea

Funding for the processing of this collection was provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, administered through the Council on Library and Information Resources' Hidden Collections grant program.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Museum of Contemporary Art interviews
Date:	1979-1986
Identifier:	AAA.musecaci
Creator:	Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago, Ill.)
Extent:	8 Linear feet
Language:	Collection is in English.
Summary:	The Museum of Contemporary Art Interviews measure 8 linear feet and contain video interviews with 35 artists, curators, and an art collector, conducted by the staff of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago between 1979 and 1986, on 107 U-Matic videocassettes.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated 1986 by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Available Formats

Some of the video recordings in this collection have been copied for research access and digital copies are available in the Archives of American Art offices.

Processing Information

The collection was fully processed and a finding aid prepared by Megan McShea in 2015 with funding provided by the Council on Library and Information Resources' "Hidden Collections" grant program.

Preferred Citation

Museum of Contemporary Art interviews, 1979-1986. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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Biographical / Historical

The Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago was founded in 1967 with Jan van der Marck as its first Director. The period from 1979 to 1986, represented in the videorecordings in this collection, was a period of physical expansion for the Museum, as well as a period when audiovisual components of artworks and exhibition design were increasingly incorporated into exhibitions and other programming. In 1979, a physical expansion of the museum begun in 1977 was unveiled with the opening of four new galleries, signaling an increased capacity for showing local and emerging contemporary artists and engaging the community.

The museum's education department began using video to create a rich record of solo and group exhibitions mounted at the museum, and created short video programs to reach out to new audiences. For their 1979 *Wall Paintings* exhibition, artists were interviewed while making their work in the museum, creating a visual record of the ephemeral works on display and the process of their creation. Video interviews with Detroit artists were created in preparation for a 1981 exhibition showing contemporary artists in the Cass Corridor community of that city. In 1983, Museum staff collaborated with Chicago's N.A.M.E. gallery to create the traveling exhibition *Eleven Chicago Artists*, which combined artwork with video documentaries showing artists at work and talking about their creative process. The exhibition traveled to city and suburban schools around Chicago. And on the centenary of the birth of architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in 1986, interviews were conducted with Mies' grandson, Dirk Lohan, also an architect, as well as architectural historians George Danforth and Franz Schulze.

Scope and Contents

The Museum of Contemporary Art Interviews measure 8 linear feet and contain video interviews with 35 artists, curators, and an art collector, conducted by the staff of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago between 1979 and 1986, on 107 U-Matic videocassettes.

The first set of interviews are with contemporary artists who had solo exhibitions at the museum between 1979 and 1985, including Chuck Close, Roger Brown, Eric Fischl, Peter and Ritzi Jacobi, Steve Keister, Sol Le Witt, and collector Dennis Adrian, whose Chicago art collection was exhibited in 1982. The remainder of the series contains four sets of interviews and other footage relating to exhibitions and programming, including the 1979 exhibition *Wall Painting - Ryman, Hafif, Pozzi, Jackson, Yasuda*; the 1981 exhibition *Kick out the jams: Detroit's Cass Corridor 1963-1977*; and the 1983 exhibition and educational program *Eleven Chicago Artists*, created with Chicago's N.A.M.E. gallery, which traveled to area high schools featuring short video documentaries about each artist that were created from the footage on the tapes in this collection. The last set includes interviews with architects Dirk Lohan and George Danforth and historian Franz Schulze, created for the 1986 program "Mies van der Rohe Remembered," celebrating the centennial of the architect's birth.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged as one series.

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Interviews with Artists, Collectors, and Curators (Boxes 1-8)
-

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Collectors and collecting -- Illinois -- Chicago -- Interviews
Art -- Michigan -- Detroit
Artists -- United States -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Video recordings

Names:

Adrian, Dennis, 1937-
Brown, Roger, 1941-1997
Close, Chuck, 1940-
Danforth, George
Fischl, Eric, 1948-
Hafif, Marcia, 1929-
Jacobi, Peter, 1935-
Jacobi, Ritzi, 1941-
Keister, Steve, 1949-
LeWitt, Sol, 1928-2007
Lohan, Dirk
Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 1886-1969
Pollock, Jackson, 1912-1956
Pozzi, Lucio, 1935-
Ryman, Robert, 1930-
Schulze, Franz, 1927-2019
Yasuda, Robert, 1940-

Container Listing

Series 1: Interviews with Artists, Collectors, and Curators, 1979-1986

8 Linear feet (Boxes 1-8)

Arrangement: Individual interviews are arranged at the beginning of the series alphabetically. The remainder of the series is arranged by exhibition. The videocassettes for the Wall Paintings and Cass Corridor exhibitions are arranged in the sequence in which they were shot, and those for the Eleven Chicago Artists exhibition are arranged alphabetically by artist.

Scope and Contents: Series contains video interviews with 35 artists, curators, and an art collector, conducted by the staff of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago between 1979 and 1986, on 107 U-Matic videocassettes. The first set of interviews in the series are with contemporary artists who had solo exhibitions at the museum between 1979 and 1985, including Chuck Close, Roger Brown, Eric Fischl, Peter and Ritzi Jacobi, Steve Keister, Sol Le Witt, and collector Dennis Adrian, whose Chicago art collection was exhibited in 1982. The remainder of the series contains four sets of interviews and other footage relating to exhibitions and programming, including the 1979 exhibition *Wall Painting - Ryman, Hafif, Pozzi, Jackson, Yasuda*; the 1981 exhibition *Kick out the jams: Detroit's Cass Corridor 1963-1977*; and the 1983 exhibition and educational program *Eleven Chicago Artists*, created with Chicago's N.A.M.E. gallery, which traveled to area high schools featuring short video documentaries about each artist that were created from the footage on the tapes in this collection. The last set includes interviews with architects Dirk Lohan and George Danforth and historian Franz Schulze, created for the 1986 program "Mies van der Rohe Remembered," celebrating the centennial of the architect's birth.

The main content of the recordings are interviews with the artists or other subjects, ranging from 1 to 2 hours in duration. Some of the tapes contain footage of exhibition installations, artworks, or footage of the artist working. Tapes with content other than interview footage are typically labeled "Inserts" referring to material that was shot to be inserted into the edited version of the interviews. The museum's education department created edited versions of many of these interviews to accompany exhibitions, but the edited versions are not in the current collection, except for one, entitled "Shaking in the Cape of Good Hope" by Karl Wirsum. Note that the two Sol Le Witt tapes are numbered 4 and 6 and no other Le Witt tapes are found in the collection.

Available Formats: Some of the material in this series has been digitized for research access.

Box 1, Folder 1-3	Dennis Adrian, 1981 6 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 1, Folder 4-6	Roger Brown, 1981 6 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 1, Folder 1-2	Chuck Close, 1981 3 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 2, Folder 1-3	Eric Fischl, 1981 6 Videocassettes (U-matic) (Tapes 5 and 6 labeled "Insert 1" and "Insert 2")
Box 2, Folder 4-5	Peter and Ritzi Jacobi, 1981

3 Videocassettes (U-matic)

Box 2, Folder 6	Steve Keister, 1980 July 17 1 Videocassettes (U-matic) (Tape labeled "Interviewed by Pauline Saliga")
Box 2, Folder 7	Sol Le Witt, 1979 June 5 2 Videocassettes (U-matic) (Tape 6 labeled "second con't of Sol Lewitt's interview and workings for piece on the promenade") Notes: Tapes labeled 4 and 6; no other tapes from this interview are found in the collection.
Box 3, Folder 1-3	Ed Paschke, 1982 February 24 5 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 3, Folder 4-7	Wall Painting - Ryman, Hafif, Pozzi, Jackson, Yasuda (1979), 1979 March 19-21 7 Videocassettes (U-matic) (Original numbers on tapes do not reflect sequence. Tape numbers listed reflect archival arrangement.) 1 Videocassettes (VHS) (Copy of Robert Ryman's interview) Notes: Missing Title: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lucio Pozzi (tapes 1-2) • Marcia Hafif (tapes 2 and 4) • Richard Jackson (tapes 2-3) • Robert Ryman (tapes 4-6) • Robert Yasuda (tapes 4 and 7) Tapes include interviews and footage of artists working, including:
Box 3, Folder 8	Kick out the jams: Detroit's Cass Corridor 1963-1977 (1981), 1981 2 Videocassettes (U-matic) Notes: Interviews on tapes include: <p>Missing Title:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackie Feigenson (tape 1) • Ellen Phelan (part 1 of 2, tape 2)
Box 4, Folder 1-4	Kick out the jams: Detroit's Cass Corridor 1963-1977 (1981), 1981 7 Videocassettes (U-matic) Notes: Interviews on tapes include: <p>Missing Title:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellen Phelan (part 2 of 2, tape 3) • Suzanne Hillberry (tapes 3-4) • John Egner (tapes 4-5) • John Piet (tapes 6-7) • Michael Luchs (tapes 8-9)
Box 4	Eleven Chicago Artists (1983)
Box 4, Folder 5-7	Sylvester Britton, 1983 July 8 5 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 5	Eleven Chicago Artists (1983)

Box 5, Folder 1-3	David Gremp, 1983 July 15 6 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 5, Folder 4-6	Richard Hull, 1983 July 26 5 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 5, Folder 7-8	Michiko Itatani, 1983 August 11 3 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 6	Eleven Chicago Artists (1983)
Box 6, Folder 1-2	Linda Kramer, 1983 June 29 4 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 6, Folder 3-5	Geraldine McCullough, 1983 July 12 6 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 6, Folder 6-8	Dan Ramirez, 1983 July 7 5 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 7	Eleven Chicago Artists (1983)
Box 7, Folder 1-2	Buzz Spector, 1983 July 24 4 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 7, Folder 3-5	Margaret Wharton, 1983 July 29 5 Videocassettes (U-matic) (Tape 5 labeled "Inserts")
Box 7, Folder 6-8	Ann Wilson, 1983 July 28 5 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 8	Eleven Chicago Artists (1983)
Box 8, Folder 1-3	Karl Wirsum, 1983 July 27 5 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 8, Folder 4	Karl Wirsum, "Shaking in the Cape of Good Hope" (Edited Program), 1983 1 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 8	"Mies van der Rohe Remembered" Program
Box 8, Folder 5	Dirk Lohan, 1986 1 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 8, Folder 6	George Danforth, 1986 March 31 2 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 8, Folder 7	Franz Schulze, 1986 April 28-29

2 Videocassettes (U-matic)

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