



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Joel Philip Myers

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Joel Philip Myers
Identifier:	AAA.myers07
Date:	2007 May 1
Creator:	Myers, Joel Philip, 1934- (Interviewee) Klein, Daniel, 1938-2009 (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	6 Items (Sound recording: 6 sound files (4 hr., 15 min.); digital, wav) 63 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Joel Philip Myers, 2007 May 1, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Joel Philip Myers, 2007 May 1, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

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

Joel Philip Myers (1934-) is a glass artist from Milton, West Virginia. Daniel Klein (1938-) is an art consultant from London, England.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Joel Philip Myers conducted 2007 May 1, by Daniel Klein, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in the artist's home, in Marietta, Pennsylvania.

Scope and Contents

Myers speaks of his childhood in Patterson, New Jersey; making charcoal drawings as a child and taking private courses in oil painting; choosing to pursue a career in advertising design; attending Parsons School

of Design in New York City; working as a package designer for Donald Deskey Associates; being influenced by Scandinavian design he saw in New York City to study abroad in Denmark; studying ceramic design at Kunsthaandvaerkerkolen in Copenhagen; meeting and marrying his wife, Birthe, while in Copenhagen; returning to the United States and going back to work for Donald Deskey; attending Alfred University and receiving his B.F.A. and M.F.A. in ceramics; accepting the position director of design for Blenko Glass Company in Milton, West Virginia with no previous experience in glass; teaching himself how to blow glass in the factory alongside the workers; the intense heat and extreme noise of a glass factory; learning of Harvey Littleton's glass workshop in 1962 in Toledo, Ohio, but being unable to attend; having limited exposure to the glass movement and developing his glass art without knowledge of the work of Littleton and his students; designing 50 to 60 different vases, bowls, decanters, and decorative objects a year from 1963 - 1970 at Blenko Glass Company; creating sculptural glass forms in his penetration pieces for his masters thesis; learning of what was happening in the studio glass world by attending the World Craft Council in 1964 in New York City; Paul Smith discovering his work and thereby gaining some publicity in Craft Horizons; being invited by Littleton to give a workshop at the University of California, Berkeley in 1968; the initial shock of seeing glass sculpture made with no real technique; his early attraction to cold-work in order to work intimately with the surface of the glass; acquisition of his work by the Toledo Art Museum and the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte, North Carolina; establishing a glass program at Illinois University in Bloomington-Normal; his attempts to recruit international students; taking a semester sabbatical in Baden, Austria; being heavily influenced by the natural world; the series Garden, Perfume Bottle, Contiguous Fragment, Dr. Zharkov, The Dialogues, and others; teaching at Pilchuck School of Glass; studying the First World War and consequently creating Musée des Beaux Arts [1996]; travels to Japan; his teaching philosophies; the prevalence of independent glass studios in the world today; and plans for the future. Myers recalls Ted Randall, William H. Blenko, Sr., William H. Blenko, Jr., Marvin Lipofsky, Fritz Dreisbach, Richard Marquis, John Lewis, Bob Ness, Bertil Vallien, David Huchthausen, John Popelka, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 3 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 6 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 15 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art -- Study and teaching -- Philosophy
- Ceramics -- Design
- Ceramics -- Study and teaching -- Denmark
- Decorative arts
- Glass blowing and working -- Study and teaching
- World War, 1914-1918

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Alfred University -- Students
- Blenko Glass Company
- Blenko, William H., 1921-2016
- Donald Deskey Associates

Dreisbach, Fritz
Huchthausen, David R. (David Richard), 1951-
Lewis, John, 1942-
Lipofsky, Marvin, 1938-2016
Littleton, Harvey K.
Marquis, Richard, 1945-
Mint Museum of Art
Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Ness, Bob
Parsons School of Design -- Students
Pilchuck Glass Center (Stanwood, Wash.) -- Faculty
Popelka, John
Randall, Theodore, 1914-1985
Smith, Paul J., 1931-
Toledo Art Museum
University of California, Berkeley -- Students
University of Illinois. -- Faculty
Vallien, Bertil, 1938-
World Crafts Council

Occupations:

Glass artists -- Pennsylvania

Places:

Japan -- Description and Travel

Preferred Titles:

Craft Horizons