



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Reuben Nakian

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Reuben Nakian
<b>Date:</b>	1981 June 9-17
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.nakian81
<b>Creator:</b>	Nakian, Reuben, 1897-1986 (Interviewee) Berman, Avis (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	105 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Reuben Nakian, 1981 June 9-17, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Reuben Nakian, 1981 June 9-17, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

These interviews are 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 others.

### Available Formats

Transcript available online.

### Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

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## Biographical / Historical

Reuben Nakian (1897-1986) was a sculptor from Stamford, Conn.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Reuben Nakian conducted 1981 June 9-17, by Avis Berman, for the Archives of American Art.

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## Scope and Contents

Nakian speaks of his childhood, growing up in New York City; his early interest in art; early ventures in sculpture; working for Paul Manship; meeting Daniel Chester French; teaching; early influences; his

European travels; techniques and materials; the relationship of artists and suffering; his portrait busts of other artists; dealers he has been affiliated with, including Edith Halpert and Valentine Dudensing; animal sculptures; his Babe Ruth sculpture; critical and public reaction to his work. He recalls Constantin Brancusi, Marcel Duchamp, Raoul Hague, William Zorach, Gaston Lachaise, and J. B. Neumann. The third voice heard on the tape is that of Nakian's assistant, Don Ross, who helps prompt Nakian to recall certain incidents.

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## General

Originally recorded on 4 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 6 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hrs., 15 min.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Art, American
- Sculptors -- Connecticut -- Stamford -- Interviews
- Sculpture -- Technique

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Names:

- Brancusi, Constantin, 1876-1957
- Duchamp, Marcel, 1887-1968
- Dudensing, F. Valentine, 1892-1967
- French, Daniel Chester, 1850-1931
- Hague, Raoul, 1905-1993
- Halpert, Edith Gregor, 1900-1970
- Lachaise, Gaston, 1882-1935
- Manship, Paul, 1885-1966
- Neumann, J. B. (Jsrael Ber)
- Zorach, William, 1887-1966