



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Gary L. Noffke

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman  
Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Gary L. Noffke
<b>Date:</b>	2010 December 4-5
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.noffke10
<b>Creator:</b>	Noffke, Gary (Interviewee) Douglas, Mary F., 1956- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
<b>Extent:</b>	106 Pages (Transcript) 4 Items (Sound recording: 4 sound files (4 hr., 49 min.); digital, wav)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Gary L. Noffke, 2010 December 4-5, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Gary L. Noffke, 2010 December 4-5, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

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## 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Gary L. Noffke (1943- ) is a goldsmith in Farmington, Georgia. Mary Douglas (1956- ) is a curator and artist in Statesville, North Carolina.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Gary L. Noffke conducted 2010 December 4 and 5, by Mary Douglas, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at Noffke's home, in Farmington, Georgia.

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## Scope and Contents

Noffke speaks of growing up in Sullivan, Illinois; disliking school; the absence of formal art education before college and doing art on his own; his grandfather's farm; attending Eastern Illinois University to study painting,

receiving a BS and MS in education with a major in art; what classes he took and his professors; his opinion about art programs in universities; the influence of the Vietnam draft; attending the University of Iowa and his introduction to metals; transferring to Southern Illinois University and his peers; learning techniques with metals; early metal work; working at Stetson University in Deland, Florida; working with colleagues and students and its influence on work; experimenting with different techniques; transition from graduate school to professional life; developing different methods for metal work, and motivations; how the notion of form and function has changed in design, especially regarding metal work and artists; the dynamics of working with students throughout the years; discusses in detail individual works and his approaches and anecdotes; his attraction to rings, simple hardware, and traditional, ancient forms; other teaching jobs before landing at the University of Georgia; building his house and studio; working in the Italy program at Cortona; his experiences at Cranbrook, Michigan and Summervale, Colorado; current and past exhibitions including the National Ring Shows; entering competitions; how the hand-made motif is important in his work; the connotation of labels of craft artist; his casual approach to the art market and formalities in the art world. Noffke also recalls Garret DeRuiter, Brent Kington, Elliot Pujol, May Lee Hu, Marci Zelmanoff, Dickie Nettles, Robert Ebendorf, Gary Erbe, Phil Fike, Bill Brown, Evon Streetman, Lane Coulter, Sue Wilde, Lydia Norell, Fred Messersmith, Tom Gingras, Charles Loloma, Fritz Dreisbach, Barry Merrit, and others.

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## General

Originally recorded on 4 SD memory cards. Reformatted in 2010 as 4 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 49 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:

Metal-work

### Types of Materials:

Interviews

Sound recordings

### Names:

Brown, William J. (William Joseph), 1923-1992

Coulter, Lane, 1944-

Cranbrook Academy of Art

DeRuiter, Garret

Dreisbach, Fritz

Eastern Illinois University -- Students

Ebendorf, Robert, 1938-

Erbe, Gary T., 1944-

Fike, Phillip G., 1927-1997

Gingras, Toms

Hu, Mary Lee, 1943-

Kington, L. Brent (Louis Brent), 1934-2013

Loloma, Charles, 1921-

Merrit, Barry

Messersmith, Fred

Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America

National Ring Show  
Nettles, Dickie  
Norell, Lydia  
Pujol, Elliot  
Southern Illinois University (System) -- Students  
Stetson University -- Faculty  
Streetman, Evon  
University of Iowa -- Students  
Wilde, Sue  
Zelmanoff, Marci