



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Herbert Palmer

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Herbert Palmer
Date:	2004 Dec. 6-22
Identifier:	AAA.palmer04
Creator:	Palmer, Herbert Bearl, 1915-2006 (Interviewee) Ehrlich, Susan, 1942- (Interviewer)
Extent:	56 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Herbert Palmer, 2004 Dec. 6-22, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Herbert Palmer, 2004 Dec. 6-22, 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.

Restrictions

Use requires an appointment.

Biographical / Historical

Herbert Palmer (1915-2006) owned the Herbert Palmer Gallery of West Hollywood, Calif. Interviewer Susan Ehrlich is an art historian from Beverly Hills, Calif.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Herbert Palmer conducted 2004 Dec. 6 and 22, by Susan Ehrlich, for the Archives of American Art, in West Hollywood, Calif.

Scope and Contents

Palmer discusses his family background and childhood in New York City; early exposure to art exhibitions; music appreciation; attending New York University; taking classes with Winhold Reiss, Meyer Shapiro, Richard Offner, and Heinrich Wolfflin; his master's thesis on Paul Cezanne's paintings of Mount Saint Victoire;

moving to California; learning to fly; meeting Lillian, his wife; founding Feigen-Palmer Gallery with Richard Feigen; other galleries in the area, including Irving Blum, David Stuart, Felix Landau, Charles Garabedian, and Joan Ankrum; Monday Night Art Walks; John Cage and David Tudor performance pieces; the many artists he's exhibited; Andy Warhol's "The Kiss"; 1968 split with Richard Feigen to become the Herbert Palmer Gallery; the theft of a Picasso sculpture in Dec. 1981 and the ensuing legal case, which involved numerous galleries and collectors; his longstanding friendships with Gordon Onslow Ford, Lee Mullican, and Wolfgang Paalen; membership to the Art Dealers Association of California; and his enjoyment of discovering art, old and new. Palmer also recalls Henriette Riess, Harold Stevenson, Lucienne Bloch, Bridget Riley, Vasa Mihich, Maillol, Red Grooms, Norman Bluhm, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 4 mini discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 15 digital wav files. Duration is 3 hr., 35 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art thefts

Types of Materials:

Interviews

Sound recordings

Names:

Ankrum Gallery
Ankrum, Joan
Bloch, Lucienne, 1909-1999
Bluhm, Norman, 1921-1999
Callahan, Harry M.
Cézanne, Paul, 1839-1906
David Stuart Galleries
Feigen Palmer Gallery
Feigen, Richard L., 1930-
Felix Landau Gallery
Garabedian, Charles
Grooms, Red
Irving Blum Gallery (Los Angeles, Calif.)
Maillol, Aristide, 1861-1944
Mullican, Lee, 1919-1998
New York University -- Students
Offner, Richard, 1889-1965
Onslow-Ford, Gordon
Paalen, Wolfgang, 1907-
Reiss, Henrietta
Reiss, Winold, 1886-1953
Riley, Bridget, 1931-
Shapiro, Meyer
Stevenson, Harold, 1929-2018

Tudor, David, 1926-1996
Vasa
Wölfflin, Heinrich, 1864-1945

Occupations:

Gallery owners -- California