



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with James Penney

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with James Penney
Identifier:	AAA.penney81
Date:	1981 August 21-December 6
Creator:	Penney, James, 1910-1982 (Interviewee) Brown, Robert F. (Interviewer)
Extent:	2 Items (sound tape reels (3 hr., 9 min.)) 79 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with James Penney, 1981 August 21-December 6, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with James Penney, 1981 August 21-December 6, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

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 is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

Biographical / Historical

James Penney (1910-1982) was a painter and educator.

Scope and Contents

Interview of James Penney, conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, in Clinton, New York, on August 21 and December 6, 1981.

Scope and Contents

Penney speaks of growing up in Missouri and Kansas; taking art classes at the University of Kansas; moving to New York during the Depression to pursue his art career; studying at the Art Students League; meeting his first wife, Frances Avery; exhibiting his paintings in New York; visiting museums; mural painting with

the WPA; working for the Jordanoff Aviation Corporation during World War II; teaching at Bennington, the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, and Hamilton College; and some of his paintings, including An Epidemic Next Year; Workers in the Snow, Central Park; The Bombed City, 1939; and Rock of Versailles. Penney also recalls Karl Mattern, Raymond Eastwood, Albert Bloch, Randall Brubaker, Chris Ritter, Jackson Pollock, Thomas Hart Benton, George Grosz, Moses Soyer, Stuart Davis, Burgoyne Diller, Bill Palmer, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 2 sound tape reels. Reformatted in 2010 as 3 digital wav files. Duration is 3 hr., 9 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Educators -- New York (State) -- Interviews
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Art Students League (New York, N.Y.)
Benton, Thomas Hart, 1889-1975
Grosz, George, 1893-1959
Soyer, Moses, 1899-1974