



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Susan Peterson

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Susan Peterson
Date:	2004 March 1
Identifier:	AAA.peters04
Creator:	Peterson, Susan, 1925-2009 (Interviewee) Smith, Paul J. (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	63 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Susan Peterson, 2004 March 1, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Susan Peterson, 2004 March 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.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Susan Peterson (1925-2009) was a ceramicist and author from Carefree, Arizona. Interviewer Paul J. Smith is a curator and art historian from New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Susan Peterson conducted 2004 March 1, by Paul J. Smith, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Carefree, Arizona.

Scope and Contents

Peterson speaks of her parents; being raised in McPherson, Kansas; spending summers in California and taking art classes there; attending Monticello College in Godfrey, Illinois; studying art and education at Mills College in Oakland, California; teaching art at the Punahou School in Honolulu, Hawaii and at the Wichita Art Association; studying ceramics at Alfred University in New York; moving to Southern California with her husband, Jack Peterson; working at the Chouinard Art Institute and building the kilns there; teaching at the University of Southern California and meeting Peter Voulkos; and teaching summers at the Idyllwild School of Music and Arts. Peterson also speaks of moving to New York City to teach at Hunter College; opening the Clayworks Studio Workshop; creating the craft program at the Joe L. Evins Appalachian Center for Crafts in Smithville, Tennessee; doing the television series "All You Ever Wanted to Know About Ceramics;" traveling around the world, including Shoji Hamada's studio in Mashiko, Japan; attending the first American Crafts Council conference and the First World Congress of Craftsmen; publishing her first book, "Shoji Hamada: A Potter's Way and Work" and how that led to writing several other books; maintaining her own studio outside of teaching; receiving various awards; changes she sees in the craft movement and education since the 1940s; studying Native American ceramic traditions; traveling cross-country with Joan Mondale; donating her archives and ceramic collection to the Arizona State University Ceramic Research Center; and her plans for the future. Peterson also recalls Roi Partridge, Carlton Ball, Marguerite Wildenhain, Aileen Osborn Webb, Maria Martinez, Bernard Leach, Michael Cardew, Armi Ratia, John Mason, Ken Price, Françoise Gilot, and many others.

General

Originally recorded on 4 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 5 digital wav files. Duration is 3 hr., 59 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Ceramics -- Study and teaching
- Decorative arts
- Women artists
- Women authors
- Women ceramicists

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

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

Occupations:

- Ceramicists -- Arizona