



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Robert Rauschenberg

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Robert Rauschenberg
Date:	1965 Dec. 21
Identifier:	AAA.rausch65
Creator:	Rauschenberg, Robert, 1925-2008 (Interviewee) Seckler, Dorothy Gees, 1910-1994 (Interviewer)
Extent:	31 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Robert Rauschenberg, 1965 Dec. 21, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Robert Rauschenberg, 1965 Dec. 21, 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.

Restrictions

This transcript is open for research. Access to the entire recording is restricted. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Biographical / Historical

Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008) was a painter and photographer from New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Robert Rauschenberg conducted 1965 Dec. 21, by Dorothy Seckler, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

In this interview Rauschenberg speaks of his role as a bridge from the Abstract Expressionists to the Pop artists; the relationship of affluence and art; his admiration for de Kooning, Jack Tworokov, and Franz Kline; the support he received from musicians Morton Feldman, John Cage, and Earl Brown; his goal to create work which serves as unbiased documentation of his observations; the irrational juxtaposition that makes up a city, and the importance of that element in his work; the facsimile quality of painting and consequent limitations; the influence of Albers' teaching and his resulting inability to do work focusing on pain, struggle, or torture; the 'lifetime' of painting and the problems of time relative symbolism; his feelings on the possibility of truly simulating chance in his work; his use of intervals, and its possible relation to the influence of Cage; his attempt to show as much drama on the edges of a piece as in the dead center; his belief in the importance of being stylistically flexible throughout a career; his involvement with the Stedelijk Museum; his loss of interest in sculpture; his belief in the mixing of technology and aesthetics; his interest in moving to the country and the prospect of working with water, wind, sun, rain, and flowers; Ad Reinhardt's remarks on his Egan Show; his discontinuation of silk screens; his illustrations for Life Magazine; his role as a non-political artist; his struggles with abstraction; his recent theater work "Map Room Two;" his white paintings; and his disapproval of value hierarchy in art.

General

Originally recorded on 2 sound tapes. Reformatted in 2010 as 4 digital wav files. Duration is 1 hr., 58 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Abstract expressionism
- Art, American
- Illustrators -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Painters -- New York (State) -- Interviews
- Photographers -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Pop art

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Albers, Josef
- Amsterdam (Netherlands). Stedelijk Museum
- Callahan, Harry M.
- De Kooning, Willem, 1904-1997
- Kline, Franz, 1910-1962
- Reinhardt, Ad, 1913-1967
- Tworokov, Jack