



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Ad Reinhardt

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Ad Reinhardt
Date:	circa 1964
Identifier:	AAA.reinha64
Creator:	Reinhardt, Ad, 1913-1967 (Interviewee) Phillips, Harlan B. (Harlan Buddington), 1920-1979 (Interviewer)
Extent:	53 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Ad Reinhardt, circa 1964, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Ad Reinhardt, circa 1964, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This interview conducted as part of the Archives of American Art's New Deal and the Arts project, which includes over 400 interviews of artists, administrators, historians, and others involved with the federal government's art programs and the activities of the Farm Security Administration in the 1930s and early 1940s.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Ad Reinhardt (1913-1967) was a painter from New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Ad Reinhardt conducted circa 1964, by Harlan Phillips, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

Reinhardt speaks of his time spent working for the easel division of the WPA; his involvement with the American Abstract Artists (AAA); his admiration for Stuart Davis (despite his lack of involvement with the AAA); his time with

the New York School in the forties; his desire for an objective Art History; the under-recognition of the abstract artists during their formative period; his feelings towards political cartoons and the social power/potential of art; his role as editor of the Columbia Jester; his unique position in the art world as an alumni of a liberal arts college rather than arts school; his time spent at the Institute of Fine Art studying under Alfred Salmony; the changing image of the artist as an intellectual (Motherwell, Rothko, Holty, Greene); de Kooning and Pollock's attempts to be the romantic artist; his bad feelings toward German and Italian Expressionists; futurists and some of the Fauve painters; his belief in collage as an anti-art; the position of art as the 'non-useful;' the exploration of meaninglessness by Kierkegaard, Kulick, and Sartre; his writing "Twelve Rules for the New Academy", "The Artist in Search of an Academy", "Art is Art Dogma", "Ten Rules for a Code of Ethics;" the importance of an aesthetic Morality; the Student Peace Movement (James Wexler, Thomas Merton); Artists' Union, American Artists' Congress, and the WPA; disapproval for the art market of the fifties and his preference towards artists with a salary making art for museums; the debate on the part of the Artists' Congress as to whether or not to support the Russian invasion of Finland; his dislike for the Bauhaus and the American carry-overs (Brooklyn Art scene); the article "ABC Art" in Art in America which claimed that he belongs to a whole new geometric ethic of imageless painting; his disapproval of Clement Greenberg's exploitation of the artist; his time spent studying with Francis Kriss; his year in the National Academy; his interest in Islamic art; his disconnect with Hofmann; his association with the Club and the Waldorf Cafeteria; his ideological opposition to de Kooning; the problems of treating art as a living; his feelings towards "The Shape of Time"; the recent mistake of art historians documenting the thirties without fully embracing the abstract artists; the confusion of fine art and cultural pieces; the idea that Abstract Art is not a vase that you pour meaning into; his belief that the three most important artistic statements in recent years have come from Clive Bell, Focillon, Kubler; the relationship between religion and art; the importance of perseverance despite lack of praise; and his speech at the Club "What's Wrong." The interview is conducted in a way that facilitates more of an artistic statement, rather than a historical/ personal question and answer session.

General

Originally recorded on 1 sound tape reel. Reformatted in 2010 as 2 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 52 min.