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Oral history interview with Richard Ritter

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | Oral history interview with Richard Ritter |
| Identifier: | AAA.ritter05 |
| Date: | 2005 August 2 |
| Creator: | Ritter, Richard Q. (Interviewee) Williams, Jan, 1952- (Interviewee) Byrd, Joan Falconer (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America |
| Extent: | 93 Pages (Transcript) |
| Language: | English . |
| Digital Content: | Digital Content: Oral history interview with Richard Ritter, 2005 August 2, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Richard Ritter, 2005 August 2, 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.

Biographical / Historical

Richard Ritter (1940-) is a glass artist from Michigan. Joan Falconer Byrd (1939-) is a professor of Art at Western Carolina University and is originally from Cardiff, Wales.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Richard Ritter and his wife Jan Williams conducted 2005 August 2, by Joan Falconer Byrd, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at the Ritter Glass Studio, in Bakersville, N.C.

Scope and Contents

Ritter speaks of his family and his childhood in Novi, Michigan, and life on an 11-acre farm; his education at Northville High School and The Center for Creative Studies; various jobs at the Bloomfield Art Association, in

Michigan, and advertising studios; his artist-in-residence position at the Penland School of Crafts, in Penland, N.C.; his experiences with the Ann Arbor Street Art Fair, Ann Arbor, Michigan, the Yaw Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan, the American Crafts Gallery, Detroit, Michigan, the Habatat Galleries, Royal Oak, Michigan, and the Heller Gallery, New York, N.Y.; about his works of art, including his Florescence series (1997-2001), Grail series (1993-1994), Family Portrait (1976), Kaete Vase (1976), and the Floral Core series (2001-present); his studios in Cass City, Michigan, and in Bakersville, N.C.; his symbiotic working relationship with wife, Jan Williams; their children: Richie, Kaete, and William; his working processes and his use of murrinis; Joan Mondale's commissioning of his work for the vice-presidential home as part of a larger commissioning of American art in the late 1970s; and his appearance on the cover of American Craft magazine in 1996. Williams speaks of her childhood on a farm in Bucks County, Pennsylvania; her education at the University of Delaware, the Philadelphia College of Art, and the Penland School of Crafts; her family's travels to Europe and Egypt; her early interest in ceramics; her skill at sandblasting; and the inspiration for her pieces, including Cass City Cows. Both recall Gil Johnson, Mark Peiser, Dominick Labino, Bill Brown, Richard Marquis, John Murphy, Wayne Bates, Ed Eberly, Petras Vaskeys, Roland Jahn, Flo Perkins, George Thiewes, Sam Pucci, Bill Warmus, Simone Travisano, Susan Clausen, David Naito, Paul Stankard, Fritz Dreisbach, Jean Sosin, Joan Mondale, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 3 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 5 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:

Decorative arts

Types of Materials:

Interviews

Sound recordings

Names:

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

Occupations:

Glass artists -- Michigan