



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Angel Rodriguez-Diaz

This interview is part of the series "Recuerdos Orales: Interviews of the Latino Art Community in Texas," supported by Federal funds for Latino programming, administered by the Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives.

The digital preservation of this interview received Federal support from the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Angel Rodriguez-Diaz
Date:	2004 April 23-May 7
Identifier:	AAA.rodri04
Creator:	Rodriguez-Diaz, Angel, 1955- (Interviewee) Cordova, Cary (Interviewer) Recuerdos Orales: Interviews of the Latino Art Community in Texas
Extent:	7 Sound discs (Sound recording, master (7 hr., 45 min.); digital; 2 5/8 in.) 6 Cassettes (Sound recording, duplicate) 94 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Angel Rodriguez-Diaz, 2004 April 23-May 7, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Angel Rodriguez-Diaz, 2004 April 23-May 7, 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

Angel Rodriguez-Diaz (1955-) is an artist from San Antonio, Tex. Cary Cordova (1970-) is an art historian from Austin, Tex.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Angel Rodriguez-Diaz conducted 2004 Apr. 23-May 7, by Cary Cordova, for the Archives of American Art, in San Antonio, Tex.

Scope and Contents

Rodriguez-Diaz speaks of his mother's upbringing and her untimely death from cancer; his childhood and schooling in Santurce, Puerto Rico, particularly his art experiences; his parents' conversion to Pentecostalism; the importance of travel in Puerto Rican culture; attending the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras; discovering his sexuality during adolescence; living in New York City; the city's gay scene on Christopher Street; exploring his identity as a Puerto Rican American; his jobs at mannequin factories; and his gradual ingratiation into the New York art world, mostly through Robert Morris. Rodriguez-Diaz also mentions his relationship with Rolando Briseño; the motifs in his paintings, such as mirrors and masks; witnessing the Tompkins Square Park riots of 1988; organizing a strike at his mannequin factory; contracting the HIV virus from a partner; Mexican art cinema; the cultural and historical similarities of Mexico and Puerto Rico; moving to San Antonio; choosing the models for his "Goddess" series; Anglo/Latino conflict within the San Antonio art scene; the commodification of Mexican culture in San Antonio; the spiritual importance of portraiture; the history of Puerto Rican artwork and culture, particularly native cultures; and the Smithsonian's acquisition of his painting, "The Protagonist of an Endless Story." Rodriguez-Diaz also recalls Antonio Molina, Sandra Cisneros, Arnoldo Roche-Rabell, John Anthes, Manuel Ramos Otero, Nitsa Tofino, Candida Alvarez, Soon Yong Ming, Robert Sward, Linda Pace, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 7 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 12 digital wav files. Duration is 7 hr., 46 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art -- Study and teaching -- Puerto Rico
- Artists (LGBTQ)
- Artists -- Puerto Rico -- Interviews
- Gay artists
- Latino and Latin American artists
- Painters -- Texas -- San Antonio -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Alvarez, Candida, 1955-
- Anthes, John
- Briseño, Rolando, 1952-
- Cisneros, Sandra
- Min, Yong Soon, 1953-
- Molina, Antonio J. (Antonio José), 1928-
- Morris, Robert, 1931-2018
- Pace, Linda
- Ramos Otero, Manuel
- Recuerdos Orales: Interviews of the Latino Art Community in Texas

Roche-Rabell, Arnaldo, 1955-
Sward, Robert, 1933-
Tofino, Nitsa