



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Frank Romero

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Frank Romero
Identifier:	AAA.romero97
Date:	1997 January 17-March 2
Extent:	99 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	Romero, Frank Rangel, Jeffrey J.
Language:	English .

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. Funding for the interview provided by the Smithsonian Institution Latino Pool Fund.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Frank Romero (1941-) is a painter from Los Angeles, Calif.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Frank Romero conducted 1997 January 17-March 2, by Jeffrey Rangel, for the Archives of American Art, in Romero's studio, in Los Angeles, Calif.

Scope and Contents

Romero discusses his growing up in East Los Angeles and his large extended family; his earliest art studies in the public schools; attending the Otis Art Institute where he studied with Joe Mugnaini and had contact with Millard Sheets and Peter Voulkos; the "very polyglut culture" of East Los Angeles; the

influences of television, western movies, rock-and-roll, and rhythm and blues on his early musical/artistic taste; time spent in New York; returning to Los Angeles in 1969; and his marriage and family.

Scope and Contents

He describes his move into Carlos Almaraz's house which became the informal meeting place of the artist group Los Four (Almaraz, Romero, Gilbert Sanchez Lujan, and Roberto "Beto" de la Rocha); the Los Four show at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1974; and the stylistic aesthetics of Los Four.

Scope and Contents

Romero describes the "boys club" nature of Chicano art centers; his contributions to the Chicano art movement; his relationship to the Chicano/Mexican culture and mainstream U.S. culture; murals done by members of Los Four for the Inner City Mural Program; his work for the Metropolitan Transit Authority; the Murals of Aztlan exhibit in 1981 at the Craft and Folk Art Museum; and his shows at the ARCO Center for the Visual Arts. He concludes with his assessment of the Chicano arts movement, the relationship between economic and art cycles, and the role of the more established artists to those of a younger generation.

General

Originally recorded on 5 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 9 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 27 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Hispanic American artists
- Hispanic American artists -- Interviews
- Mexican American art -- California -- Los Angeles
- Mexican American artists -- California -- Los Angeles -- Interviews
- Mural painting and decoration -- 20th century -- California -- Los Angeles
- Painters -- California -- Los Angeles -- Interviews
- Street art

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Almaraz, Carlos
- Los Four (Art group)

Mugnaini, Joseph A.
Otis Art Institute -- Students
Rocha, Roberto de la
Sanchez Luján, Gilbert
Sheets, Millard, 1907-1989
Voukos, Peter, 1924-2002

Occupations:

Muralists -- California -- Los Angeles -- Interviews