



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Harold Rosenberg

Archives of American Art  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Harold Rosenberg
<b>Date:</b>	1970 December 17-1973 January 28
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.rosenb70
<b>Creator:</b>	Rosenberg, Harold, 1906-1978 (Interviewee) Cummings, Paul (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	244 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Harold Rosenberg, 1970 December 17-1973 January 28, Transcript</a>

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## 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.

### Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

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## Biographical / Historical

Harold Rosenberg (1906-1978) was a writer and educator from New York, N.Y.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Harold Rosenberg conducted 1970 December 17-1973 January 28, by Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art over nine sessions.

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## Scope and Contents

Rosenberg speaks on a wide variety of topics including Marxism and Communism; art criticism; teaching and the philosophy of art; how his interest in art developed over the years; getting his writings published and starting a magazine; what intrigues him about the avant-garde; when and why he started painting; action painting; the inaccuracies in art history about Avant-gardism and Surrealism; working as a mural painter for the College Art

Association; moving from the WPA's art project to the writer's project, and becoming an art editor; what happened to the works of art done under the WPA after it ended; and moving to the Hamptons.

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## Scope and Contents

He speaks in detail on the New York art scene during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s; The Club; writing about art; politics and art; Shakespeare and literature's influence on art and vice versa; the various economic aspects of art; how the Depression affected him and the people he knew; the projects he worked on in the WPA; and working for the OWI after the WPA disbanded.

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## Scope and Contents

He recalls Mark Rothko, Harold Baumbach, Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Peter Blume, Helen Lundberg, André Breton, Arshile Gorky, Roberto Matta, Jackson Pollock, David Smith, Lee Krasner, Fernand Léger, Joan Miró, Jim Leshay, Stuart Davis, Bruce Inverarity, Barney Newman, Mark Tobey, Gregorio Prestopino, and many others.

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## General

Originally recorded on 5 sound tapes. Reformatted in 2010 as 9 digital wav files. Duration is 10 hr., 4 min.

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## General

Interview transcript is not in chronological order; arrangement designated by the interviewer Paul Cummings.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Art -- Economic aspects
- Art -- Philosophy
- Art -- Political aspects
- Art and literature
- Art criticism
- Art, American
- Avant-garde (Aesthetics) -- New York (State) -- New York
- Educators -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Surrealism

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

Baumbach, Harold, 1903-  
Blume, Peter, 1906-1992  
Breton, André, 1896-1966  
Club (New York, N.Y.)  
Davis, Stuart, 1892-1964  
De Kooning, Willem, 1904-1997  
Gorky, Arshile, 1904-1948  
Inverarity, Robert Bruce, 1909-1999  
Krasner, Lee, 1908-1984  
Lundeberg, Helen, 1908-1999  
Léger, Fernand, 1881-1955  
Matta, 1912-2002  
Miró, Joan, 1893-  
Motherwell, Robert  
Newman, Barnett, 1905-1970  
Office of War Information. Washington, D.C.  
Pollock, Jackson, 1912-1956  
Prestopino, Gregorio  
Rothko, Mark, 1903-1970  
Smith, David, 1906-1965  
Tobey, Mark  
United States. Work Projects Administration