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Oral history interview with Ed Rossbach

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Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Ed Rossbach
Date:	2002 August 27-29
Identifier:	AAA.rossba02
Creator:	Rossbach, Ed (Interviewee) Austin, Carole (Interviewer) Westphal, Katherine Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	72 Pages (Transcript)
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.

Restrictions

For information on how to access this interview contact Reference Services.

Restrictions

Access is to transcript only.

Biographical / Historical

Charles Edmund Rossbach (1914-2002) was a fiber artist from Berkeley, California. Carole Austin is a curator and writer from Orinda, California.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Ed Rossbach conducted 2002 August 27-29, by Carole Austin, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Berkeley, California.

Scope and Contents

Rossbach speaks of his early education and the influential teachers he had; his involvement with the All-Arts Club in high school; his family and the Depression; his beginnings with weaving; the rich and full experience of Cranbrook Academy of Art; his education at the University of Washington and professor Lea Miller; his use of the GI Bill; his relationship with dealers and galleries; his workplace at home; the isolation he felt as an artist; the importance of the craft movement and the very international feeling associated with it; the publications he worked on and completed, including, "Making Marionettes," (1938), "Baskets as Textile Art," (1973), "The New Basketry," (1976) and, "The Art of Paisley," (1980); his experience at Rhode Island School of Design and using the advanced power loom; Jim's Caning Shop in Berkeley, where he got a lot of his materials; the community of fiber artists that formed at Fiberworks; the "long" process of working with fiber; his dear friend Lillian Elliott; and the difficulty in preserving his artwork. Rossbach also recalls Maija Grotell, Jack Lenor Larsen, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Olga de Ameral, Pat Hickman, Ginger Laky, Chere Mah Marianne Strengell, Annie Albers, Pat Charley, Mark Balken, Daphne Farago, and others. Katherine Westphal, Rossbach's wife, concludes the interview with Ms. Austin discussing several of Ed's works in the catalog, "Ed Rossbach, 40 Years of Exploration and Innovation in Fiber Art," (1990), the accounts from Ms. Westphal add particular insight to the artwork Rossbach produced and how integral a figure Rossbach was to the field of fiber art.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Decorative arts
Fiber artists -- California -- Berkeley -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews

Names:

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

Occupations:

Weavers -- California -- Interviews