



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Moira Roth

This interview is part of the Elizabeth Murray Oral History of Women in the Visual Arts Project, funded by the A G Foundation.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Moira Roth
Date:	2011 April 22-24
Identifier:	AAA.roth11
Creator:	Roth, Moira (Interviewee) Heinemann, Sue (Interviewer) Elizabeth Murray Oral History of Women in the Visual Arts Project
Extent:	5 Items (Sound recording, master: 5 memory cards (6 hr., 9 min.); secure digital; 1.25 in) 81 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Moira Roth, 2011 April 22-24, Transcript

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.

Available Formats

Transcript available online.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Moira Roth (1933-) is an art historian and writer in Berkeley, California.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Moira Roth conducted 2011 April 22- 24, by Sue Heinemann, for the Archives of American Art's Elizabeth Murray Oral History Project, at Roth's home, in Berkeley, California.

Scope and Contents

Roth discusses her childhood and family background; her "unconventional" mother attending the London School of Economics; her "romantic childhood" growing up in Cornwall, England; her family's move to Letchworth for her to attend St. Christopher, a Montessori school; taking in evacuees from London during the Battle of Britain in 1940; childhood colored with European culture, Jewish culture, and music; at 17 moving from England to Washington, D.C., to live with her Irish father who was working for the International Monetary Fund; her early "passion for travelling"; moving to New York City in 1952; meeting John Cage; her autobiographical writings; travels in Europe; studies at the University of Vienna and the London School of Economics; deciding to be a psychiatric social worker; majoring in sociology with a minor in art history; attending graduate school in art history; her interest in Duchamp; doctoral studies at the University of California, Berkeley; interviewing artists; her marriage to Bill Roth; teaching; early publications; performances at the Woman's Building in the late 1970s; editing the book "The Amazing Decade: Women & Performance Art in America, 1970-1980" (1983); traveling with Faith Ringgold; friendships with Linda Nochlin, May Stevens, Lucy Lippard and others; experimental theater; her interest in Noh theater; the Women's Caucus for Art at CAA; The Poor Farm contemporary art space; living in the Bay Area; "rethinking feminism in terms of Asian-American Women"; globalism; the fictional character she created, Rachel Marker; and other topics. She recalls Joyce Kozloff, Miriam Schapiro, Judy Chicago, Judy Baca, Claudia Bernardi, Eleanor Antin, Margo Machida, Mary Jane Jacob, Annika Marie, Whitney Chadwick, Suzanne Lacy, Allan Kaprow, Peter Selz, and others.

System Details

Recorded on Edirol R-09HR.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art -- History -- Study and teaching
- Asian American women
- Britain, Battle of, Great Britain, 1940
- Experimental theater
- Feminism and art
- Nō
- Sociology -- Study and teaching
- Women art historians
- Women authors
- World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Antin, Eleanor
- Baca, Judith Francisca
- Bernardi, Claudia

Chadwick, Whitney
Chicago, Judy, 1939-
Duchamp, Marcel, 1887-1968
Elizabeth Murray Oral History of Women in the Visual Arts Project
Jacob, Mary Jane
Kaprow, Allan
Kozloff, Joyce
Lacy, Suzanne
Lippard, Lucy R.
London School of Economics and Political Science -- Students
Machida, Margo
Nochlin, Linda
Ringgold, Faith
Schapiro, Miriam, 1923-2015
Selz, Peter Howard, 1919-2019
Stevens, May
University of California, Berkeley -- Students
University of Vienna -- Students
Women's Caucus for Art

Occupations:

Art historians -- California -- Interviews
Authors -- California -- Berkeley

Places:

Cornwall (England : County) -- Description and Travel
Europe -- description and travel