



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Lewis W. and Erica Beckh Rubenstein

Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Lewis W. and Erica Beckh Rubenstein
Date:	1993 February 23
Identifier:	AAA.rubens93
Creator:	Rubenstein, Lewis W. (Lewis William), 1908-2003 (Interviewee) Polcari, Stephen (Interviewer) Rubenstein, Erica Beckh, 1914-2014 (Interviewee)
Extent:	2 Items (sound cassettes (1 hr. 45 min.); analog.) 50 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Lewis W. and Erica Beckh Rubenstein, 1993 February 23, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Lewis W. and Erica Beckh Rubenstein, 1993 February 23, 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.

Available Formats

Transcript is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

Restrictions

This transcript is open for research. Access to the entire audio recording is restricted. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Biographical / Historical

Lewis W. Rubenstein (1908-2003) was a painter, printmaker, and teacher and teacher at Vassar College. He lived in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Erica Beckh Rubenstein (1914-2014) was an art historian, whose Ph.D. thesis at Harvard, "Taxpayers Murals," related to New Deal murals.

Scope and Contents

An interview with Lewis and Erica Rubenstein conducted 1993 February 23, by Stephen Polcari, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

Lewis Rubenstein discusses his early career as a fresco painter, including his training in Italy and friendship with Rico Lebrun. He talks specifically about commissioned murals at the Fogg Art Museum, the Busch-Reisinger Museum, and assisting Jose Clemente Orozco on "portable murals" for the Museum of Modern Art. He talks of his move away from realism and the themes that interested him in the 1950s and 1960s. He remembers spending summers in Provincetown and taking classes with Hans Hofmann, his work teaching studio art at Vassar College, and briefly about the visiting artists program he ran there. Erica Rubenstein talks about the significance of 1930s mural paintings, the WPA movement, and government support of the arts in general.

General

Originally recorded on 2 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 3 digital wav files. Duration is 1 hr., 56 min.

General

Side B of Tape 1 is blank.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art and state
- Educators -- New York (State) -- Poughkeepsie -- Interviews
- Mural painting and decoration, American
- Painters -- New York (State) -- Poughkeepsie -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Lebrun, Rico, 1900-1964
- Orozco, José Clemente, 1883-1949
- Rubenstein, Erica Beckh, 1914-2014
- Vassar College -- Faculty -- Interviews

Occupations:

- Art historians -- New York (State) -- Poughkeepsie -- Interviews