



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with John Saccaro

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with John Saccaro
Date:	1964 June 18
Identifier:	AAA.saccar64
Creator:	Saccaro, John M., 1913-1981 (Interviewee) McChesney, Mary Fuller (Interviewer) New Deal and the Arts Oral History Project
Extent:	37 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with John Saccaro, 1964 June 18, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with John Saccaro, 1964 June 18, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Conducted as part of the Archives of American Art's New Deal and the Arts project, which includes over 400 interviews of artists, administrators, historians, and others involved with the federal government's art programs and the activities of the Farm Security Administration in the 1930s and early 1940s.

Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

John Saccaro (1913-1981) was a painter from San Francisco, Calif.

Scope and Contents

An interview of John Saccaro conducted 1964 June 18, by Mary McChesney, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

Saccaro discusses the primary influences on San Francisco art in the 1930s and how he started working for the WPA. He describes the working conditions on each of the projects in detail. Robert McChesney sat in

on the interview, and he at times helps Saccaro remember facts. (The two of them worked of the same mural project at Treasure Island.) McChesney and Saccaro mention 10 to 15 of their coworkers and reminisce about what became of them. None seems to have continued painting. Saccaro's first solo show (1939) is mentioned; he describes meeting Arshile Gorky near this time. The interview concludes with a consideration of the artist's place in society and how difficult it is to become established as a painter. Much attention is given to the fate of Saccaro's coworkers and the day-to-day experience of being a WPA artist. He discusses little of his own style, which remained by his own admission relatively unadventurous until after the war.

General

Originally recorded on 1 sound tape reel. Reformatted in 2010 as 1 digital wav files. Duration is 1 hr., 4 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Federal aid to the arts
- Painters -- California -- San Francisco -- Interviews
- Painting, American

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- New Deal and the Arts Oral History Project