



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Allan Sekula

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	1
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Allan Sekula
Identifier:	AAA.sekula11
Date:	2011 August 20-2012 February 14
Extent:	12 Items (Sound recording: 12 sound files (6 hr., 14 min.); digital, wav) 143 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	Sekula, Allan Panzer, Mary
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.

Available Formats

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

Biographical / Historical

Allan Sekula (1951-2013) was a photographer, filmmaker, and writer, based at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California. Mary Panzer (1955-) is a historian from New York, New York.

Scope and Contents

An interview with Allan Sekula conducted 2011 August 20-2012 February 14, by Mary Panzer, for the Archives of American Art at Sekula's studio and home in Los Angeles, California and at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, New York.

Scope and Contents

Sekula speaks of his career and some of the mediums he works in; language and contemporary art; Roland Barthes; his relation to contemporary art; west coast conceptualism; genre switches; realism;

documentary photography; Belgium and the industrial revolution; Meunier; minor figures; art history and marginalism; Roberto Matta; World War I; Homer Folks; Fish Story; historic cinema; economic factors of art shows and publication; galleries and the art world; growing up and his family; his father and moving; Ohio; his brothers and sisters; San Pedro; demographics of students at school; sports at school; Vietnam; protests; cross country and swimming; California; fishing; college; U.C. system; declaring a major; John Altoon; Ed Kienholz; exposure to art; visiting museums; Marcuse's classes; Baldessari's classes; course work and student life; student demonstrations; working in a library and exposure to books; father losing his job; science and working as a chemical technician; politics; his uncle committing suicide; moving away from his father; the draft; John Birch; Students for a Democratic Society; his mother; politics of his parents; Aerospace Folk Tales, autodidacts and scholarship; San Diego and Mexico; obtaining a camera and starting to use it; art school; CalArts; UCSD; Meditations on a Triptych; David Salle; Fred Lonidier; Phel Steinmetz; MFA and art training; poets; story of Allen Ginsberg and one of Sekula's sculptures; production and the audience; A Photograph is Worth a Thousand Questions, photography and the burden of tradition; pictorialism; moving to New York; Artforum; October; New York music scene; Captain Beefheart; Bo Diddley; Little Richard; Steichen and aerial photography; origins of October; New Criterion; Art Critic's Grant; teaching at Ohio State; television; technological historians; New York subway and getting a ticket for using French money; RISD lectures; Long Beach; photography; collages; Metro Pictures; New Topographics; School as a Factory; moral choice and the viewer; work method and the audience; Social Criticism and Art Practice; east and west coasts; Ed Ruscha; documentary; film, Los Angeles; cinema and social history; Ohio State Department of Photography and Cinema; Los Angeles Plays Itself; Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador; Ohio State campus, anti-Semitism; Ronald Reagan and protest; influences and colleagues; intellectual genealogy; Michael Graves and Ohio State architecture; Bad Ohio; tenure; University Exposed; AIDS issue of October; The Body and the Archive; making film; Korean War; collectors and images. Sekula also recalls Eleanor Antin, Jeff Wall, Terry Fox, Lewis Hine, Walker Evans, Paul Saltman, Marcuse, Baldessari, Sacvan Bercovitch, Stanley Miller, Jef Raskin, Paul Brach, David Antin, Howard Fried, Peter Van Riper, Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, Manny Farber, Ihab Hassan, Diane Wakoski, Jackson Mac Low, Martha Rosler, Lenny Neufeld, Joshua Neufeld, David Wing, Brian Connell, Max Kozloff, Ian Burn, Mel Ramsden, Carole Conde, Karl Beveridge, Barry Rosens, Tom Crow, John Copeland, Harry Lunn, Hilton Kramer, Grace Mayer, Carol Duncan, Eva Cockroft, Richard Pommer, Rosalind Krauss, Sally Stein, Paddy Chayefsky, John Hanhardt, Mel Ramsden, Sarah Charlesworth, Joseph Kosuth, Baruch Kirschenbaum, Robert Heinecken, Brian O'Doherty, Howard Becker, Jay Ruby, Jerry Liebling, Anna Wilkie, Ronald Feldman, John Gibson, David Ross, Britt Salvesen, Larry Sultan, Mike Mandel, Roy Ascott, Ilene Segalove, Paul Schimmel, DeeDee Halleck, Noel Burch, Joan Braderman, Woody Hayes, Thom Andersen, John Quigley, Ron Green, Kasper Koenig, Dan Graham, Jonathan Green, Christa Wolf, Catherine Lord, Ben Lifson, and Annette Michelson.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Activism
Antisemitism
Architecture
Art -- Exhibitions -- Economic aspects
Art -- History
Art -- Study and teaching
Art, Modern -- 20th century
Conceptual art
Documentary photography
Korean War, 1950-1953

Music -- New York (State) -- New York
Photographers -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
Photography
Realism
World War, 1914-1918

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Altoon, John, 1925-
Antin, David
Antin, Eleanor
Artforum
Ascott, Roy
Baldessari, John, 1931-
Barthes, Roland
Becker, Howard
Bercovitch, Sacvan
Beveridge, Karl
Brach, Paul, 1924-
Braderman, Joan
Burch, Noël, 1932-
Burn, Ian, 1939-1993
California Institute of the Arts
Captain Beefheart
Charlesworth, Sarah, 1947-2013
Chayefsky, Paddy, 1923-1981
Conde, Carol
Connell, Brian
Diddley, Bo, 1928-2008
Evans, Walker, 1903-1975
Farber, Manny
Feldman, Ronald, 1938-
Folks, Homer, 1867-1963
Fox, Terry, 1943-
Fried, Howard, 1946-
Ginsberg, Allen, 1926-1997
Graham, Dan, 1942-
Graves, Michael, 1934-2015
Halleck, DeeDee
Hanhardt, John G.
Hassan, Ihab, 1925-2015
Hayes, Woody, 1913-1987
Heinecken, Robert, 1931-
Higgins, Dick, 1938-1998
Hine, Lewis Wickes, 1874-1940
Kienholz, Edward, 1927-
Kirschenbaum, Baruch David, 1931-
Knowles, Alison, 1933-
Kosuth, Joseph.
Kozloff, Max

Kramer, Hilton
Krauss, Rosalind E.
König, Kasper
Liebling, Jerome
Lifson, Ben
Little Richard, 1932-
Lonidier, Fred
Lord, Catherine, 1949-
Lunn, Harry, 1933-1998
Mac Low, Jackson
Mandel, Mike
Matta, 1912-2002
Mayer, Grace M.
Michelson, Annette
O'Doherty, Brian
Ohio State University -- Faculty
Pommer, Richard
Ramsden, Mel
Raskin, Jef
Reagan, Ronald
Rhode Island School of Design
Rosler, Martha
Ross, David A., 1949-
Ruby, Jay
Ruscha, Edward
Salle, David, 1952-
Salvesen, Britt
Schimmel, Paul
Segalove, Ilene, 1950-
Stein, Sally
Steinmetz, Philip
Students for a Democratic Society (U.S.)
Sultan, Larry
University of California, San Diego. Department of Anthropology
Van Riper, Peter
Wakoski, Diane
Wall, Jeff, 1946-

Occupations:

Sculptors

Functions:

Art galleries, Commercial