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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Frances Senska

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Frances Senska
Identifier:	AAA.senska01
Date:	2001 April 16
Creator:	Senska, Frances, 1914-2009 (Interviewee) Forbes, Donna, 1929- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	28 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Frances Senska, 2001 April 16, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Frances Senska, 2001 April 16, 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.

Biographical / Historical

Frances Senska (1914-2009) was a ceramicist and educator in Bozeman, Montana. Donna Forbes (1929-) is the director of the Yellowstone Art Center, in Billings, Montana.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Frances Senska conducted 2001 April 16, by Donna Forbes, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

Scope and Contents

The interview took place in Senska's home and studio Bozeman, Montana. Senska speaks of her childhood in Africa and her exposure to African culture, specifically the pottery; immigrating to the United States, attending high school in Iowa City, Iowa, and completing both her BA and MA at the University of Iowa; joining the Navy; her interests in art and specifically how they developed into ceramics; her instructors; her

teaching experience; the establishment of the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana; the community of artists in Montana; how function is the most important aspect of her pottery; clay-digging expeditions; the design of her house and studio; how she listens to African music when she throws clay; the influence of craft magazines; the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts [NCECA]; honorary awards and degrees she has received; and changes in the ceramics world over the past fifty years. Senska recalls Peter Voukos, Rudy Autio, Trude Guernonprez, Henry Meloy, Jun Kaneko, Maija Grotell, Branson Stevenson and others.

General

Originally recorded on 3 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 3 digital wav files. Duration is 1 hr., 46 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Ceramicists -- Montana -- Interviews
- Ceramics -- Study and teaching
- Ceramics -- Technique
- Clay
- Decorative arts
- Women artists
- Women educators

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Archie Bray Foundation -- Faculty
- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America

Occupations:

- Educators -- Bozeman -- Montana