



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Bernarda Bryson Shahn

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Bernarda Bryson Shahn
Date:	1983 April 29
Identifier:	AAA.shahn83
Creator:	Bryson, Bernarda (Interviewee) Kirwin, Liza (Interviewer)
Extent:	37 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Bernarda Bryson Shahn, 1983 April 29, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Bernarda Bryson Shahn, 1983 April 29, 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 others.

Biographical / Historical

Bernarda Bryson (1903-2004) was a printmaker and painter from Roosevelt, New Jersey. She is the widow of artist Ben Shahn.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Bernarda Bryson conducted 1983 April 29, by Liza Kirwin, for the Archives of American Art.

Scope and Contents

Bryson speaks of her family background and education; writing for the Ohio State Journal; teaching etching and lithography; meeting Diego Rivera and Ben Shahn; the formation of the Unemployed Artists Group and her role as secretary, 1933; the Gibson Committee, the John Reed Club, and the Artists' Union in New York City; founding Art Front magazine; pressure from the Communist Party; demonstrating at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1934; lithography under Adrian Dornbush; assisting Ben Shahn; her work as an illustrator; and her painting since 1971.

General

Originally recorded on 1 sound cassette. Reformatted in 2010 as 2 digital wav files. Duration is 1 hr., 26 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art, Modern
- Women artists
- Women painters
- Women printmakers

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Artists' Union (New York, N.Y.)
- John Reed Club
- Shahn, Ben, 1898-1969

Occupations:

- Illustrators -- New Jersey -- Roosevelt
- Painters -- New Jersey -- Roosevelt
- Printmakers -- New Jersey -- Roosevelt

Preferred Titles:

- Art front*