



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Aaron Siskind

Funding was provided by the Mark Rothko Foundation. 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.

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
General.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects .....	2

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Aaron Siskind
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.siskin82
<b>Date:</b>	1982 September 28-October 2
<b>Extent:</b>	45 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Creator:</b>	Siskind, Aaron Shikler, Barbara Mark Rothko and His Times Oral History Project
<b>Language:</b>	English .

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

This interview was conducted as part of the Archives of American Art's Mark Rothko and his Times oral history project, with funding provided by the Mark Rothko Foundation.

### Acquisition Information

Others interviewed on the project (by various interviewers) include: Sonia Allen, Sally Avery, Ben-Zion, Bernard Braddon, Ernest Briggs, Rhys Caparn, Elaine de Kooning, Herbert Ferber, Esther Gottlieb, Juliette Hays, Sidney Janis, Buffie Johnson, Jacob Kainen, Louis Kaufman, Jack Kufeld, Katharine Kuh, Stanley Kunitz, Joseph Liss, Dorothy Miller, Betty Parsons, Wallace Putnam, Rebecca Reis, Maurice Roth, Sidney Schectman, Joseph Solman, Hedda Sterne, Jack Tworokov, Esteban Vicente and Ed Weinstein. Each has been cataloged separately.

### Available Formats

Transcript available on-line.

### Restrictions

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

---

## Biographical / Historical

Aaron Siskind (1903-1991) was a photographer from New York, N.Y.

## Scope and Contents

An interview of Aaron Siskind conducted 1982 September 28-October 2, by Barbara Shikler, for the Archives of American Art's Mark Rothko and His Times oral history project.

---

## Scope and Contents

Siskind recalls his childhood in New York and his early interest in poetry and later photography. He describes the evolution of his own work, the role of various influences upon his work, and the meanings that can be assigned to his work. He discusses the abstract expressionist elements of his photographs and recalls his involvement with painters, including Mark Rothko. He speaks of photographing Rothko's paintings, and describes Rothko's personality. He recalls Barney Newman, Adolph Gottlieb, Paul Strand, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Joe Solomon, Robert Motherwell, Clyfford Still, and others.

---

## General

Originally recorded on 2 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 4 digital wav files. Duration is 3 hr., 7 min.

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Abstract expressionism  
Photographers -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews  
Sound recordings

Names:

De Kooning, Willem, 1904-1997  
Gottlieb, Adolph, 1903-1974  
Kline, Franz, 1910-1962  
Mark Rothko and His Times Oral History Project  
Motherwell, Robert  
Newman, Barnett, 1905-1970  
Rothko, Mark, 1903-1970  
Solomon, Joe  
Still, Clyfford, 1904-1980  
Strand, Paul, 1890-1976