



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Paul J. Smith

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

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Paul J. Smith
Identifier:	AAA.smith10
Date:	2010 April 19-20
Creator:	Smith, Paul J. (Interviewee) Herman, Lloyd E. (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	61 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Paul J. Smith, 2010 April 19-20, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Paul J. Smith, 2010 April 19-20, 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

Paul J. Smith (1931-) is Director Emeritus of the American Craft Museum (now the Museum of Arts and Design) in New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Paul J. Smith conducted 2010 April 19 and 20, by Lloyd E. Herman, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at Smith's home, in New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

Smith recalls his childhood; attending the Art Institute of Buffalo; working in display at the Flint & Kent department store in Buffalo; his interest in "hobby crafts" and greater exploration of jewelry and wood; exhibiting; joining the staff of the American Craftsmen's Council; becoming director of the Museum of

Contemporary Crafts; developing the museum's program and international focus; organizing the "Objects: USA" exhibition in 1969; developing the permanent collection of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts (in 1979 renamed the American Craft Museum); the 30th anniversary exhibition, "Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical," in 1986; becoming director emeritus; the "Craft Today USA" tour, 1989-1993; developing a consulting service; serving as guest curator; special projects; interest in photography; the current DIY movement as a continuum of the past.

General

Originally recorded on 6 secure digital memory cards. Reformatted in 2010 as 7 digital wav files. Duration is 5 hr., 17 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Arts administrators -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

American Crafts Council. Museum of Contemporary Crafts
American Craftsmen's Council
Museum of Arts and Design (New York, N.Y.)
Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America