



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Max Spivak

Archives of American Art  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Max Spivak
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.spivak63
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1965
<b>Creator:</b>	Spivak, Max, 1906-1981 (Interviewee) Phillips, Harlan B. (Harlan Buddington), 1920- (Interviewer) New Deal and the Arts Oral History Project
<b>Extent:</b>	58 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Max Spivak, circa 1965, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Max Spivak, circa 1965, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Conducted as part of the Archives of American Art's New Deal and the Arts project, which includes over 400 interviews of artists, administrators, historians, and others involved with the federal government's art programs and the activities of the Farm Security Administration in the 1930s and early 1940s.

### Available Formats

Transcript available on-line at <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/spivak63.htm>

### Restrictions

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

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## Biographical / Historical

Max Spivak (1906-1981) was a painter and designer in New York, N.Y.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Max Spivak conducted circa 1963, by Harlan Phillips, for the Archives of American Art.

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## Scope and Contents

Spivak speaks of how he went from being an accountant to doing art; moving to Paris for three years, and how this experience changed his life; the difference between painting in Europe and painting in America; moving back to New York; why he decided to leave Paris and move back to New York; the importance of intuitive feeling; his involvement with the Gibson Committee; how he and some members of the Gibson Committee thought of the WPA; his experiences with the PWAP at the Whitney Museum; picketing outside the Mirror; his and the other artists experiences with the Project; the development of the Artist Congress; the nature of art; his work on mosaic murals; how art started losing support from the government by the late thirties; doing murals for big companies; the waning moments of the Project. He recalls Arshile Gorky, Holger Cahill, Audrey McMahon, Lee Krasner, Harold Rosenberg, Harry Knight, Lou Block, and others.

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## General

Originally recorded 1 sound tape reel. Reformatted in 2010 as 2 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 32 min.

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## General

Interview date changed to circa 1965 because the blackout of November 1965 is discussed in the interview.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Federal aid to the arts
- Mosaics
- Mural painting and decoration
- Painters -- New York (State) -- Interviews

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Names:

- Block, Lou, 1895-1969
- Cahill, Holger, 1887-1960
- Gorky, Arshile, 1904-1948
- Knight, Harry
- Krasner, Lee, 1908-1984
- McMahon, Audrey, 1900?-1981
- New Deal and the Arts Oral History Project
- Rosenberg, Harold, 1906-1978