



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with John Stephan

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | Oral history interview with John Stephan |
| Date: | 1986 May 20-1987 May 7 |
| Identifier: | AAA.stepha86 |
| Creator: | Stephan, John Walter, 1906-1995 (Interviewee) Brown, Robert F. (Interviewer) |
| Extent: | 10 Items (Sound recording: 10 sound files (6 hr., 54 min.); digital, wav) 100 Pages (Transcript) |
| Language: | English . |
| Digital Content: | Digital Content: Oral history interview with John Stephan, 1986 May 20-1987 May 7, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with John Stephan, 1986 May 20-1987 May 7, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt) |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

These interviews are 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.

Available Formats

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

Biographical / Historical

John Walter Stephan (1906-1995) was a painter.

Scope and Contents

Interview of John Walter Stephan, conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, at Newport, Rhode Island, on May 20, 1986 and May 7, 1987.

Scope and Contents

Stephan speaks of Chicago childhood and adolescence; life during the Depression; the Art Institute of Chicago; the 1930s Chicago leftist movement; the WPA and PWAP; The Tiger's Eye art magazine; Rome artistic and literary society; the New York School of artists; Betty Parsons Gallery; the Surrealists; teaching at Fairleigh Dickenson University; Hunter College; and his critiques of Pop and contemporary artists. Stephan also recalls Ruth Walgreen, Dart Stephan, Rainey Bennett, Clyfford Still, Juan de Diego, Caleb Harrison, Aaron Bohrod, Dudley Crafts Watson, Jack Jones, George Constant, Connie Moran, CJ Bulliet, Rudolph Weisenborn, Inez Cunningham, Eva Watson-Schütze, Jesus Torres, Edgar Miller, Katherine Kuh, Increase Robinson, Peterpaul Ott, Mitchell Siporin, Raymond Breinin, Holger Cahill, John Fabian, Eddie Millman, Winn Nathanson, Fairfield Porter, Norman MacLeish, Ossip Zadkine, Betty Parsons, Alfonso Ossorio, Max Ernst, Julien Levy, Peggy Guggenheim, Bill de Kooning, Mark Rothko, Franz Kline, Barney Newman, Nicolas Calas, Bob Motherwell, Monroe Wheeler, Myra Shapiro, Clement Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg, Alfred Knopf, Robert Flaherty, Jaime Sebartés, Frederick Kiesler, Robert Matta, Mario Praz, Bill Denby, Ben Johnson, Milton Gendel, Walter Auerbach, Jerry Wilhelm, Eugene Goossens, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 6 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 10 digital wav files. Duration is 6 hr., 54 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art, Modern -- 20th century
- Great Depression
- New York school of art
- Pop art
- Surrealism

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Art Institute of Chicago
- Bennett, Rainey
- Betty Parsons Gallery
- Bohrod, Aaron
- Breinin, Raymond, 1910-
- Bulliet, C. J. (Clarence Joseph), 1883-1952
- Cahill, Holger, 1887-1960
- Calas, Nicolas
- Constant, George
- Coryllis, Peter
- Cunningham, Inez
- De Kooning, Willem, 1904-1997

Denby, Bill
Ernst, Max, 1891-1976
Fabian, John
Fairleigh Dickinson University -- Faculty
Flaherty, Robert Joseph, 1884-1951
Gendel, Milton
Goossen, E. C.
Greenberg, Clement, 1909-1994
Guggenheim, Peggy, 1898-1979
Harrison, Caleb
Hunter College
Johnson, Ben
Jones, Jack
Kiesler, Frederick
Kline, Franz, 1910-1962
Knopf, Alfred
Kuh, Katharine
Levy, Julien
MacLeish, Norman, 1898-1949
Matta, 1912-2002
Miller, Edgar, 1899-1993
Millman, Edward, 1907-1964
Moran, Connie, 1898-
Motherwell, Robert
Nathanson, Winn
Newman, Barnett, 1905-1970
Ossorio, Alfonso, 1916-1990
Ott, Peterpaul, 1895-1992
Parsons, Betty
Porter, Fairfield
Praz, Mario, 1896-1982
Public Works of Art Project
Robinson, Increase, 1890-1981
Rosenberg, Harold, 1906-1978
Rothko, Mark, 1903-1970
Sebartes, Jaime
Shapiro, Myra
Siporin, Mitchell, 1910-1976
Stephan, Dart
Still, Clyfford, 1904-1980
Torres, Jesús
United States. Work Projects Administration
Walgreen, Ruth
Watson, Dudley Crafts, 1885-
Watson-Schütze, Eva, 1867-1935
Weisenborn, Rudolph, b. 1881
Wheeler, Monroe, 1899-
Wilhelm, Jerry
Zadkine, Ossip
de Diego, Juan

Occupations:

Painters -- Interviews