



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Athena Tacha

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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/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Athena Tacha
Identifier:	AAA.tacha09
Date:	2009 December 4-6
Extent:	5 Items (sound files (6 hr., 47 min.); digital, wma) 127 Pages (Transcript)
Creator:	Tacha, Athena, 1936- Berman, Avis United States. General Services Administration. Design Excellence and the Arts Oral History Project
Language:	English .

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.

Available Formats

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

Restrictions

This transcript is open for research. Access to the entire recording is restricted. Contact reference Services for more information.

Biographical / Historical

Athena Tacha (1936-) is an conceptual artist and photographer in Washington, D.C.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Athena Tacha conducted 2009 December 4-6, by Avis Berman, for the Archives of American Art's U.S. General Services Administration, Design Excellence and the Arts oral history project, at Tacha's studio, in Washington, D.C.

Scope and Contents

Tacha speaks of her family and her childhood in rural Greece; of growing up during World War II and the Greek Civil War; her early interests in art; traveling to France on a Greek government sponsored scholarship; her education at the School of Fine Arts; obtaining a Master's at Oberlin College on a Fulbright scholarship; obtaining a Ph.D. in aesthetics and art history from the Sorbonne in Paris; her decision to move to the United States; her first job as a museum curator at Oberlin's Allen Memorial Art Museum; her early shows in Ohio museums and galleries; her marriage to art historian Richard Spear; her decision to teach sculpture courses at Oberlin; her fellowship at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies, a turning point in her career; her use of sculpture, light, and the environment to develop site-specific public art pieces and installations, thoroughly discussing all recent projects; her retirement from Oberlin College and move to Washington, DC; her creative process; the influences of her travels around the world on her environmentally-conscious art works; her thoughts on the American aesthetics, change, and temporary versus permanent sculpture; recent shows at Marsha Mateyka Gallery and Katzen Art Center and her recent public art installations in the Washington, DC area. Tacha also recalls her close friendship with Oberlin professor Ellen Johnson, André Chastel, and various art dealers and former students from Oberlin College.

General

Originally recorded on 1 compact disc. Reformatted in 2010 as 5 digital wav files. Duration is 6 hr., 47 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- United States. General Services Administration. Design Excellence and the Arts Oral History Project