



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Harold Tovish

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.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Harold Tovish
Identifier:	AAA.tovish97
Date:	1997 November 13-1998 April 7
Creator:	Tovish, Harold, 1921-2008 (Interviewee) Brown, Robert F. (Interviewer)
Extent:	3 Items (sound cassettes (4 hr., 42 min.); analog.) 94 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Harold Tovish, 1997 November 13-1998 April 7, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Harold Tovish, 1997 November 13-1998 April 7, 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.

Available Formats

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

Restrictions

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

Biographical / Historical

Harold Tovish (1921-2008) was a sculptor in both Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Scope and Contents

Interview of Harold Tovish, conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution on November 13, 1997 at his home and studio in Boston, Massachusetts.

Scope and Contents

Tovish speaks of his kinetic sculpture of the 1960s; his return to kinetic work in the 1970s and early 1980s; his creative process; acceptance of death; his confidence in the role of art and his own work, despite the lack of a traditional broad base of support; his experience as a sculptor-in-residence at the American Academy in Rome, 1966; slow working procedures; his disenchantment with most modern art that employs technology; admiration for the formal economy of Minimalist art and its influence on him; the absence in his work, for the most part, of overtly political themes, yet the presence of moral stances stemming from his Depression-era background and anti-Vietnam War protests; his left wing political views; the artificiality of exhibitions; the desirability of artists organizing for mutual benefit and discourse; the transitory nature of fame; avoidance of friendships with museum curators; comparisons of his teaching experience at Boston University and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; his 1990 exhibition at Boston University and Terry Dintenfass Gallery, NYC; self-portraits and variations on them; prints and drawings curator at the Boston Public Library, regarding Boston artists; the neglect of Boston area artists by other Boston art institutions; his 1988 retrospective at the Addison Gallery of American Art; the importance of a balanced and frank working relationship with his late wife, the sculptor Marianna Pineda; the professional mores that infused their generation of artists; the major change in his sculpture in the early 1980s; a subsequent period of drawing in the late 1980s which was triggered by attacks of vertigo; interest in anatomical parts; the infrequency of sculpture exhibits; a consistent thread of "darkness" or apprehensiveness in his work; and his acceptance of his first commission, a monument to the painter John Singleton Copley for Boston's Copley Square. Tovish also recalls Hyman Bloom, William Zorach, Sinclair Hitchings, Philip Guston, Doris Lessing, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 3 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 9 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 42 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Sculptors -- Massachusetts -- Boston -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Pineda, Marianna, 1925-1996