



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with George Tsutakawa [videorecording]

Funding for this interview was provided by Warner Communications.

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with George Tsutakawa
Date:	1987 June 26-27
Identifier:	AAA.tsutak87
Creator:	Tsutakawa, George Tsutakawa, Mayumi (Interviewer)
Extent:	12 Videocassettes (BetacamSP) (Master: 12 videocassettes (Beta) (circa 20 min. each); sd., col.; 1/2 in.) 4 Videocassettes (U-matic) (Duplicate (3 sets, 12 total videocassettes); sd., col.; 3/4 in.)
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.

Related Materials

This interview was followed up in 1988 by documenting Tsutakawa's return to Fukuyama, Japan to dedicate a major work for the city's new museum of contemporary art (cataloged separately under George Tsutakawa in Japan video project). Footage from this interview was used, along with footage from the 1988 Fukuyama footage, in the documentary "George Tsutakawa: An Artists' Pilgrimage" c1990 by the Archives of American Art.

Restrictions

For information on how to access this interview contact Reference Services.

Biographical / Historical

George Tsutakawa (1910-1997) was a Japanese American painter and sculptor based in Seattle, Washington. Born in Seattle in 1910, he moved with his mother to Fukuyama, Japan, at the age of seven. While there, he took an interest in art, and was influenced by traditional Japanese practices. Returning to Seattle at age 16, he continued his education in art at the University of Washington. His interest in sculpture led to numerous commissions for fountains worldwide, a form that combined his experiences in both the Pacific Northwest and Japan. During his career, Tsutakawa designed, built, and installed over 70 fountains.

Scope and Contents

An interview of George Tsutakawa conducted 1987 June 26-27, by his daughter Mayumi Tsutakawa, for the Archives of American Art at Tsutakawa's home and studio in Seattle, Washington and at three of his fountain sculpture sites.

Scope and Contents

He discusses his youth and early education in Japan, demonstrates Sumi painting, and describes early Seattle art communities and University of Washington classes. He recalls his WWII experiences and his friendship with Mark Tobey and others, and explains the origins and evolution of fountain sculpture. Paul J. Karlstrom of the Archives of American Art introduces and concludes the interview.

General

Originally recorded on 12 videocassettes. Duration is 4 hr.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Asian American art
- Asian American artists
- Asian American educators
- Asian American painters
- Asian American sculptors
- Japanese American art
- Japanese American artists

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Video recordings

Occupations:

- Educators -- Washington (State) -- Seattle
- Sculptors -- Washington (State) -- Seattle