



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Marguerite Van Cook

Funded by the Keith Haring Foundation.

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

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Marguerite Van Cook
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.vancoo16
<b>Date:</b>	2016 September 19-21
<b>Extent:</b>	5 Items (sound files (5 hrs., 55 min.); digital, wav) 87 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Creator:</b>	Van Cook, Marguerite Fialho, Alex, 1989-
<b>Language:</b>	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.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Interviewee Marguerite Van Cook (1954- ) is an artist, writer, and performer in New York, New York.  
Interviewer Alex Fialho (1989- ) is a curator and arts writer who is the Programs Director for Visual AIDS in New York, New York.

---

## Scope and Contents

An interview with Marguerite Van Cook, conducted 2016 September 19 and 21, by Alex Fialho, for the Archives of American Art's Visual Arts and the AIDS Epidemic: An Oral History Project, at the Visual AIDS office in New York, New York.

---

## Scope and Contents

Interview with Marguerite Van Cook, conducted by Alex Fialho for the Archives of American Art, at the Visual AIDS office in New York, New York on September 19 and 21, 2016. Van Cook speaks of her childhood in Portsmouth, England and summers in France; early exposure to the arts; early sexual experiences; moving to Newcastle and forming the punk band The Innocents; moving to New York with the band; curating shows and installations and starting Ground Zero Gallery with her husband James Romberger; the devastation of the AIDS crisis on her East Village social milieu; advocating for HIV-positive homeless people; her body of visual and audiovisual artwork; raising her child during the AIDS crisis; being diagnosed, along with with Romberger, with meningitis and HIV in the mid-1990s; her current work as a doctoral candidate in French literature; her body of work as a writer; her experience of long-term HIV survivorship; and her reflections on living with HIV as a woman. Van Cook also recalls Edward Brennan, Martin Botha, Sarah Hall, Jamie Reid, Russ Meyer, Fiona Barry, Greg Van Cook, Martin Wong, Karen Finley, David Wojnarowicz, Michael Von Ofak, Luis Frangella, Keiko Bonk, Walter Robinson, Grace Borgenicht, Leonard Abrams, and others.

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

AIDS (Disease) and the arts  
Authors -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews  
Filmmakers -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews  
Performance artists -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews  
Sound recordings

Names:

Visual Arts and the AIDS Epidemic: An Oral History Project