



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral History interview with Carlos Villa

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral History interview with Carlos Villa
<b>Date:</b>	1995 June 20-July 10
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.villa95
<b>Creator:</b>	Villa, Carlos, 1936-2013 (Interviewee) Karlstrom, Paul J. (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	134 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral History interview with Carlos Villa, 1995 June 20-July 10, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral History interview with Carlos Villa, 1995 June 20-July 10, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

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## 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.

### Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

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## Biographical / Historical

Carlos Villa (1936-2013) was a Filipino American painter, curator, and educator in San Francisco, California.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Carlos Villa conducted 1995 June 20-July 10, by Paul Karlstrom, for the Archives of American Art.

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## Scope and Contents

Villa discusses his "progress" from Filipino background to his art world identity; the phenomena and individuals who contributed to the new awareness in the mid-1970s: "El Movimiento," Chicano "Rasquache," Rupert Garcia, Amalia Mesa-Baines; the idea of "recuperation," and the sense of Asian-American identity and community as a basis for his art. Villa recalls growing up in San Francisco; his early life; living in the

Tenderloin district and his exposure to racism; the influence of his cousin, artist Leo Valledor; growing up Filipino in California and the difficulties that accompanied it. Villa discusses popular (black) culture, jazz "guapo," zoot-suit style as role models and basis for aesthetic/art; his admiration for black self-esteem; his aesthetics; viewing art as a way out of the ghetto and an escape from racism.

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## Scope and Contents

Villa discusses his introduction to the California School of Fine Arts (soon thereafter the San Francisco Art Institute); his need to be part of the artist community; CSFA and other students and teachers; and his self-conception as a modernist. He discusses the technical aspects of his art; the influence of various Bay Area artists on his work; his investigation of Filipino art history and his role models; the role of the women at the CSFA and women as role models. Villa recalls his first show at Pointdexter in New York; his associations with minimalists and the Park Place Gallery group; his New York minimalist phase and his need to escape the New York environment after six years. He discusses his return to the Bay Area and his use of identity/politics as subjects for his art.

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## Scope and Contents

Villa recalls or mentions Rupert Garcia, Leo Valledor, Manuel Neri, Joan Brown, Bill Morehouse, David Stone Martin, Wallace Berman, William Wiley, Bob and Dona Hudson, Bill Allen, Elmer Bischoff, Richard Diebenkorn, Ralph DuCass, Walter Kuhlman, Wally Hedrick, Bruce Conner, Alvin Light, Claire Falkenstein, Bob McFarlane, Hayter, Tapies, Fred Martin, Nathan Oliveira, Jennifer Bartlett, Dick Maclean, Elizabeth Murray, Alfred Neumeyer, Mark Rothko, Kenneth Noland, Sol Lewitt, Mark di Suvero, Robert Grovesnor, Tom Seligman, Kurt Schwitters, Robert Rauschenberg, Angela Davis, and Moira Roth.

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## General

Originally recorded on 8 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 15 digital wav files. Duration is 7 hr., 40 min.

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## 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 curators
- Asian American educators
- Asian American painters
- Filipino American art
- Filipino American artists
- Latino and Latin American artists
- Modernism (Art)

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

Berman, Wallace, 1926-1976  
Bischoff, Elmer, 1916-1991  
Brown, Joan, 1938-1990  
Diebenkorn, Richard, 1922-1993  
Garcia, Rupert, 1941-  
Hudson, Robert, 1938-  
Neri, Manuel, 1930-  
Park Place Gallery Art Research, Inc.  
University of California, San Francisco. School of Fine Arts  
Valledor, Leo, 1936-1989  
Wiley, William T., 1937-2021

Occupations:

Painters -- California -- San Francisco  
Sculptors -- California -- San Francisco