



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Kurt Weiser

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. 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.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Kurt Weiser
Identifier:	AAA.weiser06
Date:	2006 May 22
Creator:	Weiser, Kurt D., 1950- (Interviewee) Held, Peter, 1951- (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	47 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Kurt Weiser, 2006 May 22, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Kurt Weiser, 2006 May 22, 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.

Biographical / Historical

Kurt Weiser (1950-) is an artist and educator from Tempe, Arizona. Peter Held (1951-) is a curator from Chandler, Arizona.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Kurt Weiser conducted 2006 May 22, by Peter Held, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at the artist's studio, in Tempe, Arizona.

Scope and Contents

Weiser speaks of growing up in East Lansing, Michigan, near the Kresge Art Center at Michigan State University; his mother's encouragement of his interest in the arts; dropping out of high school in the ninth grade and working odd jobs until enrolling at Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, Michigan; teaching

himself firing techniques with Hal Reigger's book, "Primitive Pottery"; his relationship with his first ceramics teacher, Jean Parsons; and going to Kansas City Art Institute and meeting Ken Ferguson.

Scope and Contents

He discusses teaching in Portland after undergraduate school, first in the city at Portland Museum Art School, then in Marlyhurst; his studio at Hillside Center; selling pottery at the Ann Arbor Street Fair; attending graduate school at the University of Michigan and earning his M.F.A.; meeting Akio Takamori on a visit back to Kansas City Art Institute; his first experience at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Mont.; and inviting international residents such as Suwanee Natewong to teach at the Bray.

Scope and Contents

He also covers his travels to Japan and Thailand; the drawings and sketches he did while abroad, and how these drawings inspired his black and white graffiti-style pottery; his interests of natural and psychological subject matter; his use of color and inspirational artists such as Maxfield Parrish and Henri Rousseau; his methods for creating imagery; his teaching position at Arizona State University in Tempe; his opinions about the roles of the universities in art education, and of craft periodicals such as American Craft; his time at Guldagergard in Skaelskor, Denmark; and his involvement with National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts.

Scope and Contents

Weiser also recalls Victor Babu, Rick Hensley, Tom Coleman, Jackie Rice, John Stevenson, Ed Labow, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 2 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 3 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 17 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Ceramicists -- Arizona -- Interviews
- Ceramics -- Study and teaching
- Ceramics -- Technique
- Ceramics. -- Economic aspects
- Decorative arts

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

Archie Bray Foundation
Babu, Victor, 1936-
Coleman, Thomas, 1945-
Hensley, Rick
Interlochen Arts Academy (Interlochen, Mich.) -- Students
Kansas City Art Institute
Labow, Ed
Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Rice, Jackie
Stevenson, John