



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with James Wentzy

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Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with James Wentzy
Identifier:	AAA.wentzy17
Date:	2017 January 23-March 31
Creator:	Wentzy, James (Interviewee) Carr, C. (Interviewer)
Extent:	15 Items (Sound recording: 15 sound files (5 hr., 13 min.); digital, wav) 164 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with James Wentzy, 2017 January 23-March 31, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with James Wentzy, 2017 January 23-March 31, 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.

Biographical / Historical

James Wentzy (1952-) is a cinematographer, documentary filmmaker, and artist in New York, New York. Cynthia Carr (1950-) is a writer in New York, New York.

Scope and Contents

An interview with James Wentzy, conducted 2017 January 23-March 31, by Cynthia Carr, for the Archives of American Art's Visual Arts and the AIDS Epidemic: An Oral History Project, at Wentzy's home and studio in New York, New York.

Scope and Contents

Wentzy speaks of his childhood in South Dakota; studying filmmaking at Southern Illinois University; moving to New York and shooting commercial films in the late 1970s; working and homesteading in the photography studio of James Dee; the beginning of the AIDS crisis; being diagnosed with HIV in 1990; his participation in and extensive documentation of ACT UP meetings, actions, and demonstrations; his place in the genealogy of AIDS activism; and his body of film and television work. Wentzy also recalls Darrel Ellis, Alanna Heiss, Arch Brown, James Dee, Robert Farber, Ho Tam, John Schnabel, Patrick Moore, Lou Maletta, Tony Arena, Vincent Santinire, David Buckingham, Jean Carlomusto, 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
- AIDS activists
- Artists -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Filmmakers -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews
- Motion pictures -- Production and direction -- Study and teaching

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- ACT UP (Organization)
- ACT UP New York (Organization)
- Arena, Tony
- Brown, Arch
- Buckingham, David
- Carlomusto, Jean
- Dee, James, 1950-
- Ellis, Darrel
- Farber, Robert, 1948-1995
- Heiss, Alanna
- Maletta, Lou
- Moore, Patrick, 1962-
- Santinire, Vincent
- Schnabel, John
- Southern Illinois University (System) -- Students
- Tam, Ho, 1962-
- Visual Arts and the AIDS Epidemic: An Oral History Project

Occupations:

- Cinematographers