



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Paula Colton Winokur

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

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Paula Colton Winokur
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.winoku11
<b>Date:</b>	2011 July 21-22
<b>Extent:</b>	9 Items (Sound recording: 9 sound files (6 hr., 24 min.)) 171 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Creator:</b>	Winokur, Paula, 1935- Riedel, Mija, 1958- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
<b>Language:</b>	English

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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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Paula Colton Winokur (1935- ) is a ceramist in Horsham, Pennsylvania. Mija Riedel (1958- ) is a curator and writer from San Francisco, California.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Paula Colton Winokur conducted 2011 July 21-22, by Mija Riedel, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at Winokur's home and studio, in Horsham, Pennsylvania.

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## Scope and Contents

Paula speaks of taking drawing and painting classes at the Graphic Sketch Club (now the Fleischer Art Memorial) in Philadelphia at age 11; her first experience handling clay at 13 or 14 when taking a class at the Philadelphia Museum of Art; when her family agreed to send her to college, providing she became a teacher, and she attended the Tyler School of Art at Temple University as a painting major;

the influence of her teacher Rudolf Staffel in her sophomore year when she took a ceramics class and fell in love with working in clay; meeting her husband Robert Winokur when they were students at Tyler, getting married in 1958, eventually having two sons; glaze testing to find a palette of glazes to use; moving to Massachusetts and starting Cape Street Pottery for their production pottery; her involvement with NCECA [National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts] and other professional organizations; when she began a 30-year teaching career at Beaver College in 1973 (more recently known as Arcadia University), building their ceramics department; changing from using stoneware to porcelain in 1970; making boxes and architectural forms; how she stopped making functional items when her first child was born and began creating the things she wanted to; the decision in 1982 to make landscapes and how geology, the Arctic, and threats to the environment influence her work; the process she uses when creating texture; selling exclusively through the Helen Drutt Gallery beginning in 1973 until the gallery closed in 2011; the important influences in her work of artists such as Michael Heizer, Carl Andre, Richard Long, Richard Serra, Olafur Eliasson, and Steven De Staebler and others; the immense the geologic formations of Mesa Verde, the Rocky Mountains, Stonehenge, Alaska and Iceland are inspiring; various lecturing opportunities and exhibits through the years, as well as a working residency she took advantage of in Hungary in 1994; slowly moving away from glazes and instead using metallic sulfates for color; that her intention is to express the relationship between the internal part of herself and the external world for other people to experience and find something in common; the importance of a liberal arts education for art students; her gelatin and clay prints; the concern over collectors of clay art dying off and no new ones taking their places; that galleries are closing and Internet galleries are the norm; meeting photographer, Imogen Cunningham, and seeing her as a wonderful role model; and the feeling that the high cost of fuel and the invention of newer materials may end ceramic classes. Paula also recalls Lowell Nesbitt, Myrna Minter, Arlene Love, Dennis Leon, Boris Blai, Ted Randall, Val Cushing, Norm Schulman, Jim McKinnel, Gertrud Natzler, Otto Natzler, Ken Ferguson, Rose Slivka, Enrique Mestre, Sandy Simon, Wayne Higby, Richard Notkin, Graham Marks, Toshika Takaezu, Yvonne Bobrowicz, Ken Vavrek, Carol Sedestrom, Lois Moran, and Ken Shores and others.

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## General

Originally recorded as 9 sound files. Duration is 6 hr., 24 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:

Art -- Study and teaching  
Ceramicists -- Pennsylvania -- Interviews  
Ceramics -- Study and teaching  
Painting -- Study and teaching  
Women artists -- Pennsylvania -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews  
Sound recordings

Names:

Andre, Carl, 1935-  
Beaver College -- Faculty

Blai, Boris, 1893-1985  
Bobrowicz, Yvonne  
Cunningham, Imogen, 1883-1976  
Cushing, Val M.  
De Staebler, Stephen, 1933-2011  
Ferguson, Ken, 1928-  
Graphic Sketch Club (Philadelphia, Pa.)  
Heizer, Michael, 1944-  
Helen Drutt Gallery  
Higby, Wayne  
Leon, Dennis, 1933-  
Long, Richard, 1945-  
Love, Arlene, 1953-  
Marks, Graham, 1951-  
McKinnell, James  
Mestre, Enrique, 1936-  
Minter, Myrna  
Moran, Lois  
Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America  
National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (U.S.)  
Natzler, Gertrud  
Natzler, Otto  
Nesbitt, Lowell, 1933-1993  
Notkin, Richard  
Philadelphia Museum of Art  
Randall, Theodore, 1914-1985  
Schulman, Norman, 1924-  
Sedestrom, Carol  
Serra, Richard, 1939-  
Shores, Kenneth, 1928-  
Simon, Sandy  
Slivka, Rose  
Staffel, Rudolf, 1911-2002  
Takaezu, Toshiko  
Temple University. -- Students  
Tyler School of Art -- Students  
Vavrek, Ken  
Winokur, Robert, 1933-  
Ólafur Elíasson, 1967-

Geographic Names:

Alaska  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Mesa Verde (Calif.)  
Rocky Mountains  
Stonehenge (England)