



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Margret Craver Withers

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Margret Craver Withers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.wither83
<b>Date:</b>	1983-1985
<b>Creator:</b>	Withers, Margret Craver, 1907- (Interviewee) Brown, Robert F. (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	5 Sound cassettes 35 Color slides 115 Pages (Transcript (1983-1984)) 12 Pages (Transcript (1985))
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Margret Craver Withers, 1983-1985, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Margret Craver Withers, 1983-1985, 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.

### Available Formats

Transcript is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

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## Biographical / Historical

Margret Craver Withers (1907-2010) was a silversmith in Boston, Massachusetts.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview with Margret Craver Withers conducted 1983-1985, by Robert F. Brown, for the Archives of American Art.

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## Scope and Contents

Withers discusses her childhood in Kansas; early education; and aptitude for drawing. Education in art and design, including studying crafts at the University of Kansas, 1925-29; her position as a grade school teacher in Kansas and as a crafts instructor at Wichita Art Association, 1930s; study with various master metalworkers, including Arthur Nevill Kirk, Arthur J. Stone, Leonard Heinrich and Wilson Weir in the USA, and Baron Erik Fleming in Sweden. Development of Hospital Service Program, with the support of Handy and Harman, precious metal refiners, during World War II, to train army therapists in metalworking for disabled soldiers; supervision in post-War period of Handy and Harman's Craft Service Department, producing films on hand-wrought silver, a traveling exhibition of outstanding contemporary silver, instructional brochures, and a series of workshops for American silversmiths, taught by European masters. Marriage in 1950 to Charles Withers, president of Towle Silver, and that company's policy of employing top designers; Towle's commissioning of works in silver from top modern sculptors; her making of silver holloware and jewelry for private clients; her re-invention of the en resille process for enameling (1959) and in the early 1980s her invention of a process for combining enamel, glass, and silver and gold leaf in jewelry; and her involvement in crafts organizations. She discusses her en resille enameling technique. [The 1985 session is transcribed, and is accompanied by slides of the work discussed].

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## General

Originally recorded on 5 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 10 digital wav files. Duration is 6 hr., 58 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:

- Decorative arts
- Enamel and enameling
- Jewelers -- Interviews
- Metal-workers -- Interviews
- Silversmiths -- Interviews
- Silverwork
- Women artists

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Fleming, Erik, Baron
- Handy & Harman (Firm)
- Heinrich, Leonard
- Kirk, Arthur Neville
- Stone, Arthur J., 1847-1938
- Weir, Wilson
- Withers, Charles C.