

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Richard Hunt

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hunt, Richard, 1935-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Richard Hunt,
Dates:	January 15, 2001
Bulk Dates:	2001
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:31:07).
Abstract:	Sculptor and painter Richard Hunt (1935 -) was internationally renowned for his artwork and his ability to transform and fuse raw material with space. Hunt completed more public sculptures than any other artist in the United States including "Jacob's Ladder" at the Carter G. Woodson Library in Chicago and "Flintlock Fantasy" in Detroit, Michigan. Hunt was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 15, 2001, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2001_025
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Sculptor Richard Hunt was born September 12, 1935, on Chicago's historic South Side. From his mother, Hunt developed an appreciation of the arts, while he developed a business acumen and interest in politics working at his father's barbershop. At an early age, Hunt gravitated towards drawing, painting and the medium through which he was to transform his own life and the art world -- sculpture. Hunt continued his artistic development at the Junior School of The Art Institute. Hunt attended the University of Illinois, Chicago, and later received a B.A.E. in 1957 from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Inspired by the modern sculptures of 20th century artists, Richard Hunt began to experiment with new techniques, including welding pieces of metal into abstract shapes. Hunt's impact on the art world was immediate. Hunt exhibited at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair, the youngest artist to do so, and sold a piece to the Museum of Modern Art that was chosen for the American Show. Hunt continued to experiment with a wide-range of sculptural techniques. With his rich body of work, Hunt has explored many historical and contemporary themes and his creations reveal the artist's profound insight into social and political issues. Hunt's ability to transform and fuse raw material with space has earned him the acclaim and respect of many.

Hunt has completed more public sculptures than any other artist in the United States. His signature pieces include Jacob's Ladder at the Carter G. Woodson Library in Chicago, and Flintlock Fantasy in Detroit, Michigan. Hunt served on the governing board of the National Endowment for the Arts and he also served on boards of the Smithsonian. Hunt is the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Richard Hunt was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on January 15, 2001, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Sculptor and painter Richard Hunt (1935 -) was internationally renowned for his artwork and his ability to transform and fuse raw material with space. Hunt completed more public sculptures than any other artist in the United States including "Jacob's Ladder" at the Carter G. Woodson Library in Chicago and "Flintlock Fantasy" in Detroit, Michigan.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Hunt, Richard, 1935-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hunt, Richard, 1935---Interviews

African American painters--Interviews.

African American artists--Interviews.

African American sculptors--Interviews.

Urban-rural migration--United States--Illinois.

Art Institute of Chicago. School.

Art and race

Metal sculpture

Art metal-work

Art galleries, Commercial--New York (State)--New York--Exhibitions

Art galleries, Commercial--Illinois--Chicago--Exhibitions

Art--Study and teaching

González, Julio, 1876-1942

Draft--United States

Black Nationalism

African American art--20th century--Themes, motives

Creation (Literary, artistic, etc.)

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Sculptor

Painter

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Richard Hunt, January 15, 2001. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Hunt, Section A2001_025_001_001, TRT: 0:30:27 ?

Richard Hunt briefly describes his mother's and father's background and how they came to Chicago. Hunt briefly describes his childhood neighborhoods and working at his father's barbershop. He discusses moving from Chicago to rural Illinois as a child and briefly contrasts his urban and rural experiences. Hunt talks about his mother's interest in cultural education and how it influenced his early interest in the arts. Hunt details his early ventures in the visual arts, including the first formal training he received from the Art Institute of Chicago as a teenager.

African American painters--Interviews.

African American artists--Interviews.

African American sculptors--Interviews.

Urban-rural migration--United States--Illinois.

Art Institute of Chicago. School.

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Art galleries, Commercial--New York (State)--New York--Exhibitions.

Art galleries, Commercial--Illinois--Chicago--Exhibitions.

Art--Study and teaching.

González, Julio, 1876-1942.

Draft--United States.

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African American art--20th century--Themes, motives.

Creation (Literary, artistic, etc.).

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Hunt, Section A2001_025_001_002, TRT: 0:30:34 ?

Richard Hunt further discusses his high school experience, detailing his interests in subjects other than the visual arts. Hunt details his choice to study at the Art Institute of Chicago, and explains why this decision helped his development as an artist. While he gained acceptance in the art world, Hunt explains how being an African American artist was difficult before the Civil Rights Movement. Hunt talks about the artists and works that inspired him to begin sculpting with metal, a decision which led to his first museum and gallery exhibitions in Chicago and New York. Hunt details winning a prize in a Chicago art show before he turned twenty years old.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Hunt, Section A2001_025_001_003, TRT: 0:30:24 ?

Richard Hunt discusses the creative foundations of his early artwork, including his formal training, his exploration of form and space, and the influence of Julio Gonzalez. He details the success of his early sculptures, some of which were displayed in New York art galleries. Hunt talks about continuing his art career even after he was drafted and served at an Army base. Hunt discusses how his choice of subject became more related to racial issues in the 1960s as opposed to his earlier work in the 1950s. He closes by detailing different teaching appointments and gallery exhibitions and explaining how these experiences helped to advance his career.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Hunt, Section A2001_025_001_004, TRT: 0:30:47 ?

In this discussion of his artwork, Richard Hunt begins by briefly describing his parents' role in his career. He continues to discuss influences on his art career. Hunt describes in detail some of his artwork with African American themes. He details the artistic process and the timeframe for completing a public artwork. Hunt recalls some of his retrospective gallery shows, crediting the Civil Rights Movement with catalyzing interest in African American artwork. He briefly talks about pressures from the Black Nationalist Movement to produce only political art. Hunt details some of the major themes in his art, and how they relate to ideas of freedom. At the end of the discussion, Hunt briefly describes one of his favorite pieces.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Hunt, Section A2001_025_001_005, TRT: 0:28:55 ?

Richard Hunt continues to discuss one of his public works dealing with form and space. He describes some of his ongoing projects, including memorials in Iowa and Georgia, and his auxiliary studio in Michigan. Hunt looks back on his career and discusses some of the factors that led to his success. He details the changing environment of the art world during the last half of the twentieth century. Hunt briefly discusses the state of and current perceptions of African American art and artists. He concludes the interview by discussing his legacy.