



Smithsonian Institution

Archives of American Art

Interview with Betty Parsons, WNYC Art Festival, 1951

Extracted on Mar-28-2024 07:59:39

The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website (transcription.si.edu), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the Archives of American Art as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the Archives of American Art website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact Archives of American Art or transcribe@si.edu

For more information on this project and related material, contact the Archives of American Art. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

RADIO TALK TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 5, 1954

What is Art?

As the Irish answer their own questions -- LIFE.

To begin with -- I would like to make it very clear what the Betty Parsons Gallery stands for.

Each Artist connected with ~~this~~ ^{^[[my]]} ~~this~~ ^{^[[the]]} Gallery is trying to communicate what he has found significant in his life, ~~otherwise I am not interested.~~

~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ ^{[[insertion]]} This is what makes This ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ importan ~~[[strickethrouh]]~~ makes the content important. ~~[[strickethrough]]~~

This is what we must ~~[[strive ?]]~~ ~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ for - ^{[[insertion]]} You will ask on what basis do I decide -- I can only answer on what these paintings make me feel. They may leave you cold, but that is my decision, and my decision is based on twenty-five years of preoccupation with this subject, and a passionate interest in this very mysterious thing, the creative, which is simply a receptive attitude toward life -- and I don't care what they are receptive ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ to ^{^[[about]]} ~~[[strickethrough "about"]]~~ ^{^[[To]]} as long as it is ALIVE ~~[[/underline]]~~ underlined. ^{^[[circled]]} ^{[[1]]} ~~[[/circled]]~~ ^{^[[*]]} repeat - ^{[[insertion]]} Visit the Gallery at any time and you will find this demonstrated, as each ^{[[insert underline]]} Artist ^{[[insert underline]]} that I ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ sh ow ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ ^{^[[show]]} MUST commit himself in this way.

To change the subject I took a trip this summer through the Middle West ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ and ~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ ^{^[[.]]} Middle South and Deep South. I found the Museums and Institutions, venerable, respecting the past, encouraging the regional and provincial ^{[[insert underline]]} but ^{[[insert underline]]} neglecting the National and contemporary scene, except for the over established name. It seems to me a GREAT pity that whatever the audience happens to be in these places have NO opportunity of seeing what goes on creatively on other places. I would like to mention that the energy and vitality creatively in whatever area I touched was evident. I only wish that there was more enterprise and conviction with those in authority and the

RADIO TALK TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 5, 1954

What is Art?

As the Irish answer their own questions -- LIFE.

To begin with -- I would like to make it very clear what the Betty Parsons Gallery stands for.

Each Artist connected with ~~this~~ ^{^[[my]]} ~~this~~ ^{^[[the]]} Gallery is trying to communicate what he has found significant in his life, ~~otherwise I am not interested.~~

~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ ^{[[insertion]]} This is what makes This ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ importan ~~[[strickethrouh]]~~ makes the content important. ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ You will ask on what basis do I decide -- I can only answer on what

these paintings make me feel. They may leave you cold, but that is my decision, and my decision is based on twenty-five years of preoccupation with this subject, and a passionate interest in this very mysterious thing, the creative, which is simply a receptive attitude toward life -- and I don't care what they are receptive

~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ ^{^[[about]]} ~~[[strickethrough "about"]]~~ ^{^[[To]]} as long as it is ALIVE ~~[[/underline]]~~ underlined. ^{^[[circled]]} ^{[[1]]} ~~[[/circled]]~~ ^{^[[*]]} repeat - ^{[[insertion]]} Visit the Gallery at any time ²⁻⁴⁻⁵⁴ and you will find this demonstrated, as each ^{[[insert underline]]} Artist ^{[[insert underline]]} that I ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ sh ow ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ ^{^[[show]]} MUST commit himself in this way.

To change the subject I took a trip this summer through the Middle West ~~[[strickethrough]]~~ and ~~[[/strickethrough]]~~ ^{^[[.]]} Middle South and Deep South. I found the Museums and Institutions, venerable, respecting the past, encouraging the regional and provincial ^{[[insert underline]]} but ^{[[insert underline]]} neglecting the National and contemporary scene, except for the over established name. It seems to me a GREAT pity that whatever the audience happens to be in these places have NO opportunity of ~~seeing~~ what goes on creatively on other places. I would like to mention that the energy and vitality creatively in whatever area I touched was evident. I only wish that there was more enterprise and conviction with those in authority and the

Interview with Betty Parsons, WNYC Art Festival, 1951
Transcribed and Reviewed by Digital Volunteers
Extracted Mar-28-2024 07:59:39



Smithsonian Institution

Archives of American Art

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)