

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Artis Lane

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Lane, Artis
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Artis Lane,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 16, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:17:58).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Sculptor and painter Artis Lane (1927 - ) is an award-winning portrait painter and sculptor; subjects include John F. Kennedy, Frank Sinatra, Henry Kissinger, Barbara Bush, Aretha Franklin, Michael Jordan, and Rosa Parks. Lane was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 16, 2004, in Los Angeles, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_235
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Artis Lane was born in North Buxton in southern Ontario, Canada, on May 14, 1927. When she was two years old, Lane's family moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where Lane attended school and began to distinguish herself as an artist. By the age of fifteen, she was painting portraits of her classmates, and after graduating from high school, she was awarded a scholarship to the Ontario College of Art in Toronto. After graduating, she married journalist Bill Lane and moved with him to Detroit, where the Urban League, Detroit Chapter, played an instrumental role in Lane's being the first woman to be admitted to Cranbrook Art Academy. Lane used her artistic talent to help support her family by painting portraits of auto industry executives and then Governor of Michigan George Romney.

Lane met actress Diahann Carroll shortly afterwards, and moved to New York City, where she continued to paint portraits while becoming a member of Portraits Incorporated. She soon moved to Los Angeles and began working with Universal Studios. There, she met actor Cary Grant, and the two became close friends. Over the ensuing decades, she was commissioned to paint such notables as President John F. Kennedy, Frank Sinatra, Henry Kissinger, Barbara Bush, Rosa Parks, Michael Jordan and Aretha Franklin, among others. In addition to her portraiture, Lane created bronze sculptures for the National Council of Negro Women's Dorothy Height and Mary McLeod Bethune.

Lane has created bronze sculptures for the Soul Train Awards and has designed book covers and the original logo for the Dance Theatre of Harlem. Lane has held exhibitions throughout the United States and Canada. Her works can be seen in the Smithsonian Institution, the University of Missouri Library, AT&T's corporate collection, the offices of Motown Records and numerous private galleries.

Lane is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Women of Excellence Award from the Chatham-Kent Family YMCA in Canada, the Museum of African American Art Award in Los Angeles, and the Women for

Women Award from the Martin Luther King, Jr. General Hospital Foundation. In 2004, Lane continued to live and work in Los Angeles.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Artis Lane was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 16, 2004, in Los Angeles, California, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Sculptor and painter Artis Lane (1927 - ) is an award-winning portrait painter and sculptor; subjects include John F. Kennedy, Frank Sinatra, Henry Kissinger, Barbara Bush, Aretha Franklin, Michael Jordan, and Rosa Parks.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

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

### Persons:

Lane, Artis

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Lane, Artis--Interviews

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African American painters--Interviews

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African American sculptors--Interviews

Cary, Mary Ann Shadd, 1823-1893

African American families--Canada--Ontario--North Buxton

African Americans--Genealogy

Abdul, Raoul

Segregation--Ontario--North Buxton

Underground Railroad--Canada

Cranbrook Academy of Art

Portrait painting

Detroit (Mich.)--Social life and customs

Los Angeles (Calif.)--Social life and customs

Art--Philosophy

Metaphysics

X, Malcolm, 1925-1965--Portraits

Reagan, Ronald--Portraits

Creation (Literary, artistic, etc.)

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Sculptor

Painter

# HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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## 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 Artis Lane, November 16, 2004. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Artis Lane, Section A2004\_235\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Portrait artist Artis Lane begins by offering background on her famous abolitionist grandmother, Mary Ann Shadd Cary. She also details her family background in the all-black community in North Buxton, Ontario, Canada, talking about both sides of her family. Lane then discusses her early artistic endeavors and shares vivid memories of her childhood.

African American painters--Interviews.

African American sculptors--Interviews.

Cary, Mary Ann Shadd, 1823-1893.

African American families--Canada--Ontario--North Buxton.

African Americans--Genealogy.

Abdul, Raoul.

Segregation--Ontario--North Buxton.

Underground Railroad--Canada.  
Cranbrook Academy of Art.  
Portrait painting.  
Detroit (Mich.)--Social life and customs.  
Los Angeles (Calif.)--Social life and customs.  
Art--Philosophy.  
Metaphysics.  
X, Malcolm, 1925-1965--Portraits.  
Reagan, Ronald--Portraits.  
Creation (Literary, artistic, etc.).

Video Oral History Interview with Artis Lane, Section A2004\_235\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Artis Lane describes her lineage and other family members of note and success, including Raoul Abdul. She also details the social life and network of her all-black community in North Buxton, Ontario, Canada, which was a final stop on the Underground Railroad. Lane recalls her education in elementary school, and her art education in high school and at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, where she became the first black student to study there. She also discusses the racial climate in Canada and her family's reaction to her marrying an American.

Video Oral History Interview with Artis Lane, Section A2004\_235\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Artis Lane details the beginnings of her painting career, explaining her skill in portraiture and talking about some of the people she painted, explaining how she was fortunate to move to Detroit and land several commissions of prominent black Detroit residents. After her divorce, she moved to Los Angeles, where her artistic career continued to thrive. Lane then discusses her painting style, explaining how she explores metaphysics in her painting.

Video Oral History Interview with Artis Lane, Section A2004\_235\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Artis Lane recalls many famous people she has painted, including Dorothy Height, Cary Grant, Charlton Heston, Ronald Reagan, Nelson Mandela, John F. Kennedy, Rosa Parks, and Bill Clinton. Lane explains how she has developed friendships with many of her subjects. Lane also talks about her creative process and her exploration of sculpture.

Video Oral History Interview with Artis Lane, Section A2004\_235\_001\_005, TRT: 0:19:18 ?

Artis Lane talks about her sculptures, including works portraying Malcolm X and Ronald Reagan. She then describes the life and career of her late husband, Vince Cannon, and his partnerships with other notable Hollywood figures. Reflecting on her prolific career as an artist, Lane expresses her hopes and concerns for the black community and considers her legacy and how she would like to be remembered.