



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Kevin Cole

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cole, Kevin
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Cole,
Dates:	January 15, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:21:10).
Abstract:	Art professor and mixed media artist Kevin Cole (1960 -) was an adjunct professor at Georgia State University's School of Art and Design until 1998. Since 1992, Cole's artwork has evolved from the use of the necktie as an icon, motif and symbol of power. His work emphasizes the relationship between color and music, particularly jazz, blues, rap, and gospel. Cole was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 15, 2007, in Fairburn, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_009
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Art professor and mixed media artist Kevin E. Cole was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas on January 19, 1960 to Jessie and Sam Cole, Jr. He received his B.S. degree in art education from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff in 1982; his M.A. degree in art education a year later, and his M.F.A degree in drawing from Northern Illinois University in 1984.

Cole began his art career as an art teacher at Camp Creek Middle School in College Park, Georgia in 1985. At the same time, he also became an adjunct oprofessor at Georgia State University's School of Art and Design where he remained until 1998. In 1990, Cole was chairperson of the visual and performing arts magnet program of Tri-Cities High School in East Point, Georgia until 1994. Later, in 2003, he became the chairman of the Fine Arts Department at Westlake High School where created the school's first arts program. Cole's artwork is well known for including imagery of neckties as symbols of power and emphasizes the relationship between color and music, particularly jazz, blues, hip-hop, and gospel. He incorporates patterns and textures from traditional African cloths to speak to human conditions and behaviors.

In 1994, Cole was commissioned by the Coca-Cola Company to create a fifteen story mural celebrating the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. The mural took two years to create and was a little over 800 square feet. He has been featured in "Who's Who in Education" and received the Award of Excellence for Public Art by the Atlanta Urban Design Commission.

Cole was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on January 15, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Kevin Cole was conducted by Denise Gines on January 15, 2007, in Fairburn, Georgia, and was recorded on 5 Betacam SP videocassettes. Art professor and mixed media artist Kevin Cole (1960 -) was an adjunct professor at Georgia State University's School of Art and Design until 1998. Since 1992, Cole's artwork has evolved from the use of the necktie as an icon, motif and symbol of power. His work emphasizes the relationship between color and music, particularly jazz, blues, rap, and gospel.

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:

Kevin Cole

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Kevin Cole--Interviews

African American artists as teachers--Interviews.

African American artists--Interviews.

Art teachers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Kevin Cole, January 15, 2007. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/22/2011 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, January 15, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Cole, Section A2007_009_001_001, TRT: 0:29:00
2007/01/15

Kevin Cole slates the interview and shares his favorites. He was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas on January 19, 1960 to Jess Mae Cole and Sam Cole, Jr. Cole has six siblings: Vera, Sammia, James, Marie, Ruthie and Rosie; Cole is the sixth child. His paternal grandfather, Sam Cole, Sr. always encouraged him to be politically active and told him how African Americans had been lynched by their neckties when they tried to vote. Cole then talks about his close relationship with his mother, Jessie Mae.

African American families--Arkansas--Pine Bluff.

African American grandparents--Arkansas.

Grandfathers--Arkansas.

Brothers and sisters--Arkansas.

African American mothers--Arkansas--Pine Bluff.

Mothers and sons--Arkansas.

Lynching--Southern States.

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Cole, Section A2007_009_001_002, TRT: 0:29:00
2007/01/15

Kevin Cole discusses his education in Pine Bluff, Arkansas and how the schools were segregated in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. He then attended Pine Bluff High School where he had to quit athletics due to an injury. To fill up his time, he began taking art classes and discovered his creative passion. After graduating in 1978, Cole went to the University of Arkansas--Pine Bluff for the study of art and his professors were noted African American artists like Earnest Davidson and Tarrence Corbin who taught him how to mix different media and forms. Davidson and Corbin pushed him to enter art shows and at nineteen years old, Cole was showing his works professionally alongside older established artists.

African American students--Education (Secondary)--Arkansas--Pine Bluff.

University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff--Students.

University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff--Faculty.

African American artists--Arkansas.

African American universities and colleges--Arkansas.

African American art.

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Cole, Section A2007_009_001_003, TRT: 0:28:10
2007/01/15

Kevin Cole discusses his experience studying at the University of Arkansas--Pine Bluff and pledging the Kappa Alpha Psi, Inc. fraternity. Cole received his B.S. in art education in 1982, encouraged by his professors to become a teacher even though he had a speech impediment. Wanting to further his education, Cole then went on to receive his M.A. degree in art education from University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and then his M.F.A. degree in drawing from Northern Illinois University in 1984. While working towards his M.F.A. degree Cole, Cole encountered racism from his painting professor who told him that minority artists would never succeed in the art world. At his graduate thesis show, called "Have You Checked Your Closet," Charles Prince, an executive of Johnson & Johnson bought every work of art. Cole then talks about how the abstract works of Tarrence Corbin and Sam Gilliam have influenced his own works that focus on the interplay of sight, sound, and color.

African American students--Education (Higher).
Art--Study and teaching.
African Americans in art.
Discrimination in education.
Gilliam, Sam, 1933-.
African American artists--United States.
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff--Students.
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign--Students.
Northern Illinois University--Students.
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Cole, Section A2007_009_001_004, TRT: 0:28:30
2007/01/15

Kevin Cole discusses his career after earning his M.F.A. degree in drawing. His first major art commission was for a large mural called "Sign of the Times" for the new city hall of Atlanta, Georgia. In 1990, he became the chairman of their visual and performing arts magnet program at Tri-Cities High School in East Point, Georgia. While working in Georgia, he was represented by the McIntosh Gallery which forwarded his name to the Coca Cola, Inc. when they were searching for an artist to create a mural for them to celebrate the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. He created a fifteen foot high mural that memorialized figures such as Christine King Farris and Walter Kimbrough. After he created the mural, he received many offers from galleries to put on shows but instead he decided to go back to teaching high school art classes in Atlanta.

African American artists--Georgia--Atlanta.
Artists as teachers.
Art teachers--Georgia.
Olympic Games (26th: 1996: Atlanta, Ga.).
Mural painting and decoration.
Magnet schools--Georgia--Atlanta.
Art galleries, Commercial--Georgia--Atlanta.

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Cole, Section A2007_009_001_005, TRT: 0:26:30
2007/01/15

Kevin Cole discusses his how his artistic expression has evolved and how his art now focuses on the aftermath of tragedies of the September 11, 2001 and Hurricane Katrina. He has created a series called "Warriors" inspired by Maynard Jackson, the former mayor of Atlanta, Georgia. As an educator, Cole hopes that younger generations understand that learning is a process of doing. He believes that there is too much emphasis on science and technology and not enough on the arts in school curriculums. Cole then talks about how he hopes to be remembered as a good father and husband as well as a person who made a difference. Cole ends the interview narrating photographs.

African American artists--Georgia.
Jackson, Maynard, 1938-2003.
African American art.
Art--Study and teaching.
Artists as teachers.
African Americans--Conduct of life.