

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Alvia Wardlaw

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Wardlaw, Alvia J.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw,
Dates:	December 3, 2016 and May 7, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014 and 2016
Physical Description:	14 uncompressed MOV digital video files (6:30:26).
Abstract:	Art history professor and curator Alvia Wardlaw (1947 -) is professor of art history and director/curator of the University Museum at Texas Southern University. She served as the curator of modern and contemporary art for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston from 1995 to 2009, and has curated the award-winning exhibits, Black Art Ancestral Legacy: The African Impulse in African American Art and The Quilts of Gee's Bend. Wardlaw was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 3, 2016 and May 7, 2014, in Houston, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_155
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Art historian and curator Alvia J. Wardlaw was born on November 5, 1947 to Virginia Cage and Alvin Wardlaw. She was raised in Houston, Texas and graduated from Jack Yates High School in 1965. Wardlaw earned her B.A. degree in art history from Wellesley College in 1969, and her M.A. degree in art history from New York University in 1986. In 1996, she became the first African American to receive a Ph.D. degree in art history from the University of Texas at Austin.

From 1972 to 1974, Wardlaw worked as a curatorial assistant at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston (MFAH). In 1974, she was promoted to associate curator of primitive art and education and was also hired as an adjunct professor at Texas Southern University, where she went on to serve as assistant and associate professor of art history. From 1973 to 1989, Wardlaw curated a number of exhibitions at various institutions, including *African Tribal Art* (1973); *Roy DeCarava: Photographs* (1975); *Ceremonies and Visions: The Art of John Biggers* (1980); *Homecoming: African American Family History in Georgia* (1982); *John Biggers: Bridges* (1986); and the 1989 watershed exhibition *Black Art Ancestral Legacy: The African Impulse in African American Art* for the Dallas Museum of Art. She subsequently served as an adjunct curator of African American art at the Dallas Museum, and, in 1995, was named curator of modern and contemporary art for the MFAH. Wardlaw went on to organize *The Art of John Biggers: View from the Upper Room* (1995); *The Quilts of Gee's Bend* (2002); *Something All Our Own: The Grant Hill Collection of African American Art* (2003); and *Notes from a Child's Odyssey: The Art of Kermit Oliver* (2005). Wardlaw also became director/curator of the University Museum at Texas Southern University, and continued to work as curator of modern and contemporary art at the MFAH until 2009, when she retired from her position.

Wardlaw has received numerous honors and awards. She was a Fulbright Fellow in West Africa in 1984, won a Fulbright Award for study in Tanzania, East Africa in 1997, was a Senior Fellow for the 2001 American Leadership Forum, and was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame in 1994. She also received the Award of Merit from the University of Texas at Austin and the Ethos Founders Award from Wellesley College, was recognized as an African American Living Legend by African American News and Issues, and was named Texas Southern University's Research Scholar of the Year in 2009. In addition, *Black Art Ancestral Legacy* was named Best Exhibition of 1990 by *D Magazine*, and *The Quilts of Gee's Bend* received the International Association of Art Critics Award in 2003.

Wardlaw has served on the Advisory Boards of the National Black Arts Festival and Hampton University, as well as the Scholarly Advisory Committee of the Smithsonian National Museum of African-American History and Culture. She was also a co-founder of the National Alliance of African and African American Art Support groups in 1998.

Wardlaw lives in Houston, Texas.

Alvia Wardlaw was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 7, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Alvia Wardlaw was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 3, 2016 and May 7, 2014, in Houston, Texas, and was recorded on 14 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Art history professor and curator Alvia Wardlaw (1947 -) is professor of art history and director/curator of the University Museum at Texas Southern University. She served as the curator of modern and contemporary art for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston from 1995 to 2009, and has curated the award-winning exhibits, *Black Art Ancestral Legacy: The African Impulse in African American Art* and *The Quilts of Gee's Bend*.

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:

Wardlaw, Alvia J.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Wardlaw, Alvia J.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Curator

Art History Professor

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 Alvia Wardlaw, December 3, 2016 and May 7, 2014. 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 Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_001_001, TRT: 1:30:50 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_001_002, TRT: 2:29:02 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_001_003, TRT: 3:28:15 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_001_004, TRT: 4:29:21 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_001_005, TRT: 5:29:06 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_001_006, TRT: 6:28:19 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_001_007, TRT: 7:24:30 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_002_008, TRT: 8:28:24 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_002_009, TRT: 9:29:23 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_002_010, TRT: 10:28:48 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_002_011, TRT: 11:29:35 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_002_012, TRT: 12:27:12 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_002_013, TRT: 13:29:10 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Alvia Wardlaw, Section A2014_155_002_014, TRT: 14:18:31 ?