

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Joyce Owens Anderson

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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>	Owens, Joyce, 1947-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Joyce Owens Anderson,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 13, 2006
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2006
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:20:41).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Mixed media artist Joyce Owens Anderson (1947 - ) was an artist and art educator whose artwork was featured in many galleries and publications. She was curator of the Galleries Program at Chicago State University. Anderson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 13, 2006, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2006_140
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chicago-based artist, teacher and curator Joyce Owens Anderson was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She grew up in a working class neighborhood in Philadelphia. Owens' mother, Eloise Owens, was a trained opera singer, who encouraged her daughter to become an art teacher. Nevertheless, Owens attended Howard University, where she earned her B.F.A. degree in art. Owens then attended Yale University, earning her M.F.A. degree in painting. After working various jobs, including arts and crafts director, art teacher, and producer for Philadelphia's CBS television station, Owens moved to Chicago, Illinois. She then spent eight years working for WBBM-TV, CBS Channel 2 in Chicago as the graphic arts coordinator for news. Owens did additional work for the company as a graphic artist, researcher and news assistant, all the time painting and exhibiting her art.

After Owens had a solo exhibition at Chicago State University she was invited to join the faculty. She has taught there since 1996, specializing in studio painting and drawing. Joyce Owens is known for addressing issues of racism, skin color and black self-determination through her paintings, masks, and installations. Her art materials are primarily acrylic paints on canvas, wood, and paper. Found objects are often incorporated into her two- and three-dimensional works. Owens' artwork has been shown in juried, invitational, solo and group exhibitions in galleries and museums nationally. Two of her curatorial efforts were singled out by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs as featured programs during Chicago Artists Month. Some other highlights of her career include being selected the featured artist for Columbia College's fifteenth annual DanceAfrica Chicago Festival; inclusion in Daniel T. Parker's book *African Art: The Diaspora and Beyond*; "The Art of Culture" exhibition and catalog that also featured artist/art historian, Samella Lewis; and Howard University's "A Proud Continuum: Eight Decades of Art at Howard University," a juried exhibition of former Howard art students including Elizabeth Catlett.

Owens' work has been featured in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Chicago* magazine, *The Chicago Reader*, *New Art Examiner*, *Rolling Out Chicago*, *TimeOut Chicago*, Chicago's PBS affiliate's *Art Beat Chicago*,

CBS2-TV, ABC7-TV Chicago and other magazines and newspapers in Chicago and other cities where her art has been shown.

In 2006, Owens was appointed curator of the Galleries Program at Chicago State University. That same year, she was awarded First Prize by Margaret Hawkins, a critic for *ArtNews* Magazine, for her Survivor Spirits Installation at the ninth Annual Art Open at Woman Made Gallery in Chicago, having been previously awarded first prize by the artist Faith Ringgold in the 5th International Open. Owens has worked for Random House as a children's book illustrator and was hired to paint the official portrait of former Chicago mayor Eugene Sawyer, among other commissions and honors. Owens is a long time member of Sapphire and Crystals, a collective of African American women artists, and of the Black Artists of D.C. Owens is featured in the "I've Known Rivers" project on the website of the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, and is an associate editor of the *Journal of African American History*. Owens has two sons, Scott and Kyle; she lives in Chicago with her husband, journalist Monroe Anderson.

*Bio Photo courtesy of Brent Jones*

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Joyce Owens Anderson was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on November 13, 2006, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Mixed media artist Joyce Owens Anderson (1947 - ) was an artist and art educator whose artwork was featured in many galleries and publications. She was curator of the Galleries Program at Chicago State University.

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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:

Owens, Joyce, 1947-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Owens, Joyce, 1947- --Interviews

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African American painters--Interviews

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Women painters--Interviews

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African American art museum curators--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

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African American artists as teachers--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Mixed Media Artist

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## 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 Joyce Owens Anderson, November 13, 2006. 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 Joyce Owens Anderson, Section A2006\_140\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:25 ?

Joyce Owens Anderson was born on July 1, 1947 to Eloise Owens Strothers and Elijah Owens in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Anderson's paternal grandparents migrated from the Carolinas to Philadelphia, where her father purchased a gas station, and later worked at the Frankford Arsenal. Her maternal grandparents began their careers as educators in Georgia. After moving to Philadelphia, her grandfather obtained a position at the post office, while her grandmother worked as a nurse. They became active in the Elks organization, and were eventually listed in Philadelphia's social register. Anderson's mother graduated from Simon Gratz High School, and became a noted operatic soprano on the East Coast. She experienced color discrimination from other African Americans due to her fair complexion, and decided to marry a man with darker skin, like Anderson's father. Anderson's parents met and married in Philadelphia, where they raised three children, including Anderson. They divorced when she was young.

African American painters--Interviews.

Women painters--Interviews.

African American art museum curators--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

African American artists as teachers--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Joyce Owens Anderson, Section A2006\_140\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:55 ?

Joyce Owens Anderson grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At five years old, she moved with her mother and siblings to the home of her maternal grandmother, Florence Collier Franklin, on Glenwood Avenue. Anderson began her education at the Pratt Arnold School, and transferred during the third grade to Francis D. Pastorius Elementary School. She went on to attend the integrated General Louis Wagner Junior High School and Germantown High School, and spent the summers at Camp William Penn. Owens Anderson was interested in art from an early age. She frequently practiced drawing; visited the Philadelphia Museum of Art; and took lessons in tap dance, ballet and piano. She also learned about the arts from her mother, Eloise Owens Strothers, who was an operatic soprano. In addition to her artistic influence, Owens Anderson's mother was also civic minded. She encouraged Owens Anderson to vote, and brought her to her first civil rights protest at Philadelphia's all-white Girard College.

Video Oral History Interview with Joyce Owens Anderson, Section A2006\_140\_001\_003, TRT:

0:30:57 ?

Joyce Owens Anderson was raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where her family was politically active. Her uncle, Jack T. Franklin, photographed civil rights activities like the desegregation efforts at Girard College; and her mother, Eloise Owens Strothers, served on the Mayor's Commission on Women. Owens Anderson was a student at Germantown High School; and, since its art program was lacking, took art classes at the Stella Elkins Tyler School of Art and the Philadelphia High School for Girls. Anderson also served as the art editor of her high school yearbook. She decided to leave Philadelphia for college; and, upon graduating in 1965, enrolled at Howard University in Washington, D.C. There, she studied under artists James A. Porter, David Driskell, Lois Mailou Jones and Ed Love; and initially majored in art education. However, under the mentorship of Professor Leo Robinson, Owens Anderson transferred to the B.F.A. degree program, where she studied painting.

Video Oral History Interview with Joyce Owens Anderson, Section A2006\_140\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:37 ?

Joyce Owens Anderson received a B.F.A. degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. She studied under painter Lois Mailou Jones, who became Anderson's role model as a female artist; and scholar David Driskell, who taught her art history courses. She also took a variety of studio art courses, including drawing, printmaking and ceramics. After graduating, Owens Anderson enrolled in the Yale School of Art and Architecture's M.F.A. degree program. As one of the school's few African American students, she initially felt tokenized, but became more at ease after learning about the school's admissions process. Upon earning her M.F.A. degree, Owens Anderson returned home to care for her injured mother in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There, she joined the programming department at WCAU-TV. Owens Anderson eventually moved to Chicago, Illinois where she worked in the WBBM-TV newsroom as a researcher for the program 'Two on Two.' Her colleagues included CBS television anchors Bill Kurtis and Walter Jacobson.

Video Oral History Interview with Joyce Owens Anderson, Section A2006\_140\_001\_005, TRT: 0:30:38 ?

Joyce Owens Anderson moved to Chicago, Illinois, where she joined the CBS WBBM-TV newsroom. While working there from 1974 to 1982, she held a variety of positions, including graphic designer and graphics coordinator; but found the work to be artistically unfulfilling. During this time, Owens Anderson continued to paint, and exhibited her artwork at galleries like the South Side Community Art Center. She also participated in the 'Black Creativity Juried Art Exhibition' at the Museum of Science and Industry, and became a noted figure in Chicago's black arts community. Owens Anderson describes her artistic process and her methods for creating three dimensional art pieces, such as her masks and sculptural works. She also remembers participating in an art show in Washington, D.C. to raise money for the crisis in Biafra during the Nigerian Civil War; and describes her first impression of Chicago's neighborhoods, which she found to be noticeably segregated between the city's North and South Sides.

Video Oral History Interview with Joyce Owens Anderson, Section A2006\_140\_001\_006, TRT: 0:31:15 ?

Joyce Owens Anderson worked at CBS WBBM-TV in Chicago, Illinois from 1974 to 1982. Outside of work, she painted, and raised two sons with her husband, Monroe Anderson, in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. In the 1980s, she participated in the 'Black Creativity Juried Art Exhibition,' where

sculptor Martin Puryear served as one of the jurors. Although she was dissatisfied with her submission, her artwork won the exhibition prize. In 1996, Owens Anderson joined the art department at Chicago State University. There, in addition to teaching courses, she became the curator of the President's Gallery. Early on, she curated an exhibition to showcase the faculty's artwork, including pieces by Ausbra Ford and Marva Lee Pitchford-Jolly. Owens Anderson describes the history of Chicago State University's art department. She also talks about her artistic process; her preferred artistic media; and her 'Survivor Spirits' series, which portrayed the stories of former slaves.

Video Oral History Interview with Joyce Owens Anderson, Section A2006\_140\_001\_007, TRT: 0:17:54 ?

Joyce Owens Anderson was an art professor at Chicago State University in Chicago, Illinois. She also served on the advisory boards for the Chicago Artists Month and Chicago's Woman Made Gallery; and participated in a panel about the role of women in Chicago's arts community, which was held by the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Anderson reflects upon her teaching philosophy, and the value of art and creativity. She talks about her the inspiration for her artwork, including her family members, and historic events like the attacks of September 11, 2001, which inspired her 'Crying Man' series. She shares her hope to devote all her time to painting in the future, and concludes the interview by reflecting upon her legacy.