

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Adger Cowans

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cowans, Adger W.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans,
Dates:	March 29, 2022
Bulk Dates:	2022
Physical Description:	11 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:29:18).
Abstract:	Photographer Adger Cowans (1936 -) was a protégé of Gordon Parks and is a member of the Kamoinge Workshop and the African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists (AfriCOBRA). Cowans was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 29, 2022, in Bridgeport, Connecticut. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2022_035
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Photographer Adger Cowans was born on September 19, 1936, in Columbus, Ohio, to Beatrice Watson and Wilbur Cowans. Having graduated with his B.F.A. degree in photography in 1958 from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, he went on to study at the School of Motion Picture Arts and the School of Visual Arts, in New York City.

In 1958, Cowans enlisted in the United States Navy Reserves, working as a photographer. After his discharge in 1960, he began working at *Life* magazine as well as with well-known photographer Gordon Parks. In 1963, Cowans joined the Kamoinge Workshop and participated in solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally. He also worked for photographer Henry Clarke, expanding into commercial photography. With his membership in the International Cinematographers Guild, Cowans branched out into film, including working on various Hollywood films such as *Cotton Comes to Harlem*.

In 1979, Cowans joined the African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists (AfriCOBRA) collective. His exhibitions have included *I Sight: Adger Cowans and Toni Parks*, with Toni Parks, daughter of Gordon Parks, in 1993, *Illuminations: Paintings and Photographs* at Castle Gallery, College of New Rochelle, New York in 1994, and *Working Together: The Photographers of the Kamoinge Workshop* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, in New York City, in 2020.

Cowans's photographs have appeared in *Sacred Bond: Black Men and Their Mothers* (Little, Brown), published in 2000; *Personal Vision: Photographs* (Glittari), accompanied by the 2018 exhibit *Personal Vision: The Exhibition* at Hearne Fine Art, in Little Rock, Arkansas; his autobiography, *Art in the Moment: Life and Times of Adger Cowans* (Noahs Ark Publishing), published in 2019; and *Adger* (21st Editions), published in 2022.

Cowans received the Lorenzo il Magnifico alla Carriera at the Florence Biennale of Contemporary Art, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Visiting Scholars Award from Wayne State University, and the Gordon Parks Legendary Award in 2001. In 2017, Cowans was the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from Howard University.

Cowans lives in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Adger Cowans was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 29, 2022.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Adger Cowans was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 29, 2022, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and was recorded on 11 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Photographer Adger Cowans (1936 -) was a protégé of Gordon Parks and is a member of the Kamoinge Workshop and the African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists (AfriCOBRA).

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:

Cowans, Adger W.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cowans, Adger W. --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Photographer

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 Adger Cowans, March 29, 2022. 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 Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_001, TRT: 1:30:02 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_002, TRT: 2:29:34 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_003, TRT: 3:31:03 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_004, TRT: 4:29:18 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_005, TRT: 5:32:11 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_006, TRT: 6:29:40 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_007, TRT: 7:28:29 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_008, TRT: 8:30:18 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_009, TRT: 9:29:48 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_010, TRT: 10:28:37 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Adger Cowans, Section A2022_035_001_011, TRT: 11:30:18 ?