Overview
How to Use This Collection
Transcribe
Work in Progress Manager
Tools & Resources
Manage Your Account
Search all site collections
Search this collection only
Tools & Resources
Terms of use and conditions
Help
Contact us
Collections
Collection Home
Collection Home
Collection Home

DR. CHENG-CHIA PAN: And what was your impression?

MR. SMITH: My impression? [Indian Affairs, 42 Volume = 42]

DR. CHENG-CHIA PAN: Did you have any impression when you remember who received it?

MR. SMITH: I don't remember, I think of them, but I don't know whether I could remember. I'm including, I don't know how I remember everything, all of the people, but right now, I don't think I could come up with a list to again. I could remember, I could remember the impression, I guess, I guess I could remember that.

DR. CHENG-CHIA PAN: But did you have, relationships with your Indian people?

MR. SMITH: Yes, I've been the Minister for the last [illegible] years, or longer.

DR. CHENG-CHIA PAN: Much.

MR. SMITH: Well, I've been Minister, I think maybe that an exaggeration, I've been Minister, I think that's a bit of people that I - I don't know, I'm not the only Minister, I don't know how many Ministers have been Minister since I've been there, but the last three years, I - I think there was - I - I - I think, there was - I - I - I think, there was a lot of, I've been, I've been, I've been

MS. DIVISIONALPRINT: Yes, you need never change your name legally, because the state also blesses both boys that wanna, too.

MS. SMITH: And you have ... Can, you know ...

MS. DIVISIONALPRINTING: But it is to you, you don't know who the name is, because it's, it's, it's,

MS. DIRIGIBLEPLUM:[illegible]

MS. DIRIGIBLEPLUM:[illegible]

MS. DIRIGIBLEPLUM:[illegible]

[Tony Hawk]

But engaging, so I think that what happens is I mean I don't think you guys understand, I don't think you guys understand what happens when you have a very, very, very,

MS. SMITH: What did they ... take that away from you?

DR. CHICAGO-PRIMETIME: Well, it does – it may have – I don't know – I'm – I'm not – I don't might be entitling, entitling, I'm not – I'm not – I'm not – I don't know. I don't know. I don't know.

MS. SMITH: Okay, right. Well, it's a poster. It's a bread, you know, Barbara Ann used to be like a bread and roll and stuff bakery thing, that came to your door. And he has a — there's a Barbara — big Barbara Ann poster that he — I don't know. I'd have to go look at it and see whether he changed it at all, or whether he just wrote on it or something. And — but —

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: The — why was — I mean, it seems like there's this moment in time where you and Allen Ruppersberg, you said like these are ideas that are in the air. Looking at it now, I think people will see — not only see your work not only as a feminist, but also as, you know, like a — very much immersed in what we would loosely call post-conceptual art, borrowing from appropriated —

MS. SMITH: Yeah, yeah. [Al's piece - I can't be a movie star because I don't have a chin — AS]

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: — sources, narrative, text.

MS. SMITH: I'm a big appropriator.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You're a big appropriator.

MS. SMITH: Yeah.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: When you look back now, do those decisions seem clearer to you in terms of what your decision-making process was?

MS. SMITH: No. I think I'm one of those people that flies by the seat of their pants.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

[They laugh.]

MS. SMITH: You know, I just, you know, I know when I see it kind of stuff.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. SMITH: I don't know. I'm not sure. I mean, I think that I had to be really together and business-like and stuff when I was building all that big [work — AS] and that kind of stuff. But when it comes to just making stuff, that's something I can, you know, that's easy.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You work out of — do you consider your work out of — on that level, to be intuitive?

MS. SMITH: What, my collage work?

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yes.

MS. SMITH: Yeah, and it's also what I do every day. I mean, I —

[Audio break.]

MS. SMITH: I don't do the giant public art things anymore. And — I just make stuff all the time. I just — I do. I'm — you know, I just — I do it just because I'm bored.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] Did you ever — so you don't have some sort of grand, theoretical model for how, you know, you should be borrowing things from pre-printed material or —

MS. SMITH: I mean, I've made stuff out of everything. I mean, everything you can imagine, even like, you know, like those little music sheets that I glued, you know, glued Italian gum wrappers on when we were in Bellagio. You know what I mean? It's like, I just make stuff. It's just — it's like, I don't smoke cigarettes anymore. You know, I don't do anything. I, you know — bad, so that now I, you know, we have an occasional beer. And I — so I just make stuff.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, one thing that I don't think we've talked about as much as I'd like is the role of literature in the evolution of all your work. I mean — and that is one thing, I think, that's interesting.

MS. SMITH: Well, it was more at the beginning. It was more at the beginning. It was more — I was, you know, I was a big reader before I was an artist. And I'm not as big a reader now as I was when I was young, but I somehow — it was something that I knew because I was an only child. And reading is something you can do if you're an only child. So beside — you can make stuff, and you can read, right? That's what you can do. And, you know, I mean, you have to go out and find other kids if you want to, you know —

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But language itself has always been a big part.

MS. SMITH: Right, exactly. And my mother died when I was a kid. And my father was a psychiatrist. And he was — he was really smart and well-read. And I don't know. It just, it just — you just go with what you got.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] And you're still using a — but you're still using words today —

MS. SMITH: Oh, yeah.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: — in terms of —

MS. SMITH: Just so know, just — I'm — you know, I don't use them quite in the same ways, but I use them.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. SMITH: And I don't know. It's — I've been doing it for so long now that I don't think about it. I just do it.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is there — if someone has a label about your art, do you consider yourself a post-conceptual artist? Or do you consider yourself a feminist artist?

MS. SMITH: No. I think you — I think I could be in so many categories. I could be collage artist, you know. I don't see myself as being very theoretical. I'm pretty much intuitive. A lot of my decisions are just based on what I feel about stuff or whether I see — I don't know — some kind of, you know, car crash ahead. You know, I'm careful about who I work with. I'm careful about what I do. I — you know, I do stuff I like. And I make stuff pretty much all — you know, every day or every week or, you know, something. So, it's kind of a Zen thing in a weird kind of way. I just do it. And I don't think about myself when I'm doing it. And it's become important that way.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Do you think artists today are limited by the fact that so much theory has to be absorbed?

MS. SMITH: You know, I completely — I don't know anything about theory. I have to say. I don't even understand — I mean, you know, I'm not very — I'm pretty dense when it comes to theory. I don't really understand it. And I don't understand why we need it. I mean, do you know what I mean? I don't — I'm just the — I'm like prehistoric. I'm like pre-theoretical.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Do you think —

MS. SMITH: And I don't have to — I don't have to stick up for what I do because, you know, if people buy it and hang it on the wall or they commission me to do things, I don't care. I mean, that's all the theory I need.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] You don't feel like you have to defend your position?

MS. SMITH: Oh, are you kidding me? I'm too old to defend my position. Besides, my position is kind of, you know, at my age, position's kind of rickety anyway, so —

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Do you feel like it limits other artists that they have to defend themselves with — [with theory — AS]

MS. SMITH: I don't even know who these people are that have to defend themselves. Who do they — who defends themselves? Give me an example.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I think younger artists feel they have to have an artist's statement that will hold up in a critical way.

MS. SMITH: Oh, yeah, but see, those are just people that just came out of Otis or Art Center or something. Those people are not people that have been, you know, out working very long.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah. No, so, I mean for the younger generation.

MS. SMITH: I mean, that's why you're just carrying around your passport to prove that you're a citizen, you know, kind of thing, in case somebody asks.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] Tell me about —

MS. SMITH: Yeah.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: — what question I haven't asked.

MS. SMITH: I don't know.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Or what statement you want to make that I haven't — that we haven't connected with yet.

MS. SMITH: Well, as you can see, I'm not a real big statement maker. I do better if there's a question to go with it.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is there anything I haven't gone into —

MS. SMITH: I don't know.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: — here that you think we should be talking about?

MS. SMITH: I don't know here. I think you've been actually pretty together here. We talked about my public art. We talked about the [many — AS] shows I've been in. [Laughs.] I don't know. Is there any other questions you want to ask that are anything you haven't covered? Yeah, I kind of feel like I made too much stuff, because I have this, you know, big, nasty inventory of stuff that I have to pay storage on.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Picasso never thought he made too much stuff.

MS. SMITH: Yeah, I know, but he didn't have the kind of storage problems that I do.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: He just kept buying new houses and sticking stuff in them.

MS. SMITH: Oh, yeah, well.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Fill them up and buy another house. Maybe you'll have to come to — as you —

MS. SMITH: I don't have enough money to buy another house — if I had enough money, I'd pay — to do that, I'd just pay the storage.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] Well —

MS. SMITH: I mean, a lot of this stuff you have to check out, anyhow.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, on that note, we'll conclude this interview.

MS. SMITH: Okay. All right.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Thank you for your time.

MS. SMITH: And you have a — this is the final one, right? You have everything.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Unless you have something else you'd like to add.

MS. SMITH: I can't think of anything offhand, can you?

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I can't.

MS. SMITH: We talked about just about everything.

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Thank you for your time.

MS. SMITH: You're welcome. You want to go to lunch?

MS. DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yes.

MS. SMITH: You want to go to Hama Sushi?

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

Through collecting, preserving, and providing access to our collections, the Archives inspires new ways of interpreting the visual arts in America and allows current and future generations to piece together the nation's rich artistic and cultural heritage.

DONATE

©2021 Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Smithsonian Institution
Terms of Use | Privacy Policy

Contact

Feedback