

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Paul D. Goodnight

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Goodnight, Paul
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Paul D. Goodnight,
Dates:	April 14, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:20:01).
Abstract:	Painter Paul D. Goodnight (1946 -) was a Boston area artist whose painting, Links and Lineage has become a popular print. Goodnight was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 14, 2003, in Boston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2001_029
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Artist Paul Goodnight was born in Chicago on December 31, 1946. At a young age, his mother took him to New London, Connecticut, and later to Boston, where a foster family raised him. After finishing high school, Goodnight was drafted into the Army, and served two years in Vietnam. The experience changed him and upon his return, he was unable to speak because of the horrors he witnessed there. Soon after, Goodnight began to paint, reverting to the means of expression he had employed as a child.

Finding release in his art, Goodnight regained his voice and enrolled in the Vesper George School of Art, taking English classes at a nearby community college to help him along the way. In 1976, he earned his B.A. from the Massachusetts College of Art. Goodnight continued to create, and in 1984 one of his works was displayed on an episode of *The Cosby Show*. Since then, his works have been featured in such programs as *Seinfeld*, *ER* and *Living Single*. Goodnight then began traveling the world, studying the art of the Caribbean, Africa, Russia and Asia, as well as working under contemporary masters such as Alan Crite and John Biggers.

In 1991, Goodnight founded Color Circle Art Publishing, which is dedicated to the perpetuation of the art and imagery of the African diaspora. His works adorn the homes of such notables as Maya Angelou, Wesley Snipes and Samuel L. Jackson, as well as the halls of the Smithsonian Institute. In 1996, Goodnight was commissioned to create a piece for the 1996 Olympic Games, and in 1998, he designed the World Cup poster. He was awarded the U.S. Sports Academy Artist of the Year Award in 1997. Goodnight's biggest inspiration is his daughter, Aziza.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Paul D. Goodnight was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 14, 2003, in Boston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Painter Paul D. Goodnight (1946 -) was a Boston area artist whose painting, Links and Lineage has become a popular print.

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:

Goodnight, Paul

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Goodnight, Paul--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Painter

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 Paul D. Goodnight, April 14, 2003. 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 Paul D. Goodnight, Section A2001_029_001_001, TRT: 0:29:25 ?

Paul Goodnight was born in Chicago, Illinois on December 31, 1946, to Marjorie Johnson Brown and Curtis Goodnight. However, he was raised in foster care by Essie and James Lockett with multiple foster brothers and sisters. While Goodnight developed a relationship with his mother and his brother Carl, he was raised with the Locketts between Boston, Massachusetts and Connecticut and moved a lot during his childhood. He reflects on his experience growing up in housing projects and attending various schools, where he enjoyed athletics but struggled behaviorally and academically. Goodnight started drawing in grade school and recalls getting into trouble for some of his drawings.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul D. Goodnight, Section A2001_029_001_002, TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Paul Goodnight attended several high schools in Boston, Massachusetts and

Connecticut, where he struggled behaviorally although he enjoyed athletics. Upon his graduation in the mid-1960s from New London High School in Connecticut, his foster father, James Lockett encouraged him to live on his own. Goodnight, struggling to stay out of trouble, was falsely accused and convicted of sexual assault. He was incarcerated for a year and a half before being exonerated. Goodnight describes this as a difficult period for him, especially since his biological mother passed away during his incarceration. Upon being exonerated, he was drafted into the Vietnam War and describes the effect both being incarcerated and the experience in the war had on his psyche.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul D. Goodnight, Section A2001_029_001_003, TRT: 0:29:15
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Paul Goodnight served in the Vietnam War, and he describes the various violent and traumatic experiences he had in the U.S. Army. He was discharged from the U.S. Army on July 4, 1969. Returning home to Boston, Massachusetts, he struggled after being in Vietnam, and began using heroin. Even after he stopped, he continued to sell drugs at colleges in the Boston area, and he reflects on how difficult that period in his life was. Simultaneously, he was able to attend art school at Vesper George College in Massachusetts followed by Massachusetts School of Art. He describes his alliances with black artists in the 1970s. Upon graduation, he briefly taught in Charlestown in Boston, Massachusetts, before pursuing art full time.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul D. Goodnight, Section A2001_029_001_004, TRT: 0:29:25
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Paul Goodnight describes his development as an artist and the relationships he formed with other black artists, including Lois Mailou Jones, John Biggers, Elizabeth Catlett, and Bing Davis, in the 1980s. He traveled to Haiti where his artistic point of view developed as he painted the atrocities he saw there under the dictatorship of “Baby Doc” Jean-Claude Duvalier. After returning from Haiti, and showing his work in Washington D.C., he next traveled to Nicaragua during their revolution, depicting the Contra’s atrocities. Upon returning to from Nicaragua, Goodnight began to achieve more commercial success in the late 1980s and early 1990s with his prints, and his work became more well known in the black art prints movement.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul D. Goodnight, Section A2001_029_001_005, TRT: 0:30:10
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Paul Goodnight began creating artwork for Hollywood set design in the late 1980s, and by the early 1990s, he found more commercial success with his artwork appearing on numerous black TV shows. He describes the process of growing a business but he experienced a downside to this success on his personal and artistic growth. In the 1990s, Goodnight traveled to Mozambique to depict their civil war with several of his artist colleagues. After this trip, he traveled to Brazil to paint and experienced a spiritual clarity: he describes the process of learning to trust in his happiness. Later, Goodnight returned to art school and began to teach and mentor young artists. He describes his hopes for the black community, reflecting on his own experiences as a young man and artist.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul D. Goodnight, Section A2001_029_001_006, TRT: 0:30:40
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Paul Goodnight reflects on the process of mentorship among artists; he talks about his relationships with artists in his career and how his community has helped him develop as an artist. Goodnight describes what he has learned from his mentor, John Biggers. He articulates the need for positive rites of passages

for black men, noting how the experiences of his youth have affected him. Goodnight talks about traveling to Ghana to paint, as recommended by his mentor, John Biggers. He describes his legacy and how he wants to be remembered. Then, Goodnight narrates his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul D. Goodnight, Section A2001_029_001_007, TRT: 0:20:46
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Paul Goodnight narrates his photographs.