

# NSU ART MUSEUM FORT LAUDERDALE

## Oral Family History Video Interview

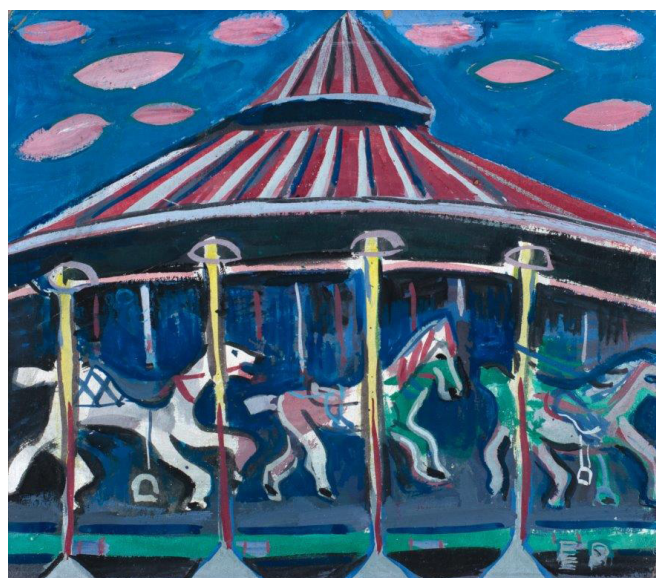
### At-Home Art Activity

Inspiration for your Imagination:  
The Story of Esther Phillips as Told by Her Niece Milly Silverstein

Creating a video recording of someone's story is one way of documenting and preserving an Oral History. Talking to living relatives about the past, especially older relations whom you may not often see, can give insight into events and other family members that have helped shape your life and inspired you to become the person you are today. The verbal telling of a story often adds personality and a more dynamic viewpoint to a narrative that is not always clear in written words. Incorporating images and artifacts from the past, as they relate to a story, help to bring into context the era in which a story took place and supply evidence of family memories and what they valued.



Esther Phillips, *Happy Face House*, late 1940s - early 1950s. Private Collection of Renée and Richard Goldman



Esther Phillips, *Merry Go Round*, late 1940s - early 1950s. Private Collection of Renée and Richard Goldman

# Art vocabulary:

**Oral history** - A record of the past that is passed on verbally through stories told about previous events or lives.

**Videographer** - A person who uses a variety of visual recording technology to preserve moving and usually audible content.

**Interviewee** - A person selected to ask questions of in order to document a story for others to later view.

**Narrative** - The practice or art of telling stories of connected events.

## Materials:

- Pen or Pencil
- Paper for note taking
- A video recording device such as a cell phone or camera or computer with Zoom capabilities
- Tripod if available
- Seat and area to interview and record live guest

## Instructions:

**Step 1** - Select and request to interview a relative or friend about your family's history. Always ask the interviewee in advance if they approve of you recording the interview.

**Step 2** - Using a pencil or pen and some paper, write down some thoughtful questions that you would like to ask your chosen interviewee. This may also be done on the computer if you prefer. Keep in mind that everyone has a story to tell which will make your interview more interesting than just asking about facts and dates. For example, instead of asking, when did you move to New York? say something like, tell me about your journey and your first impressions of your new home.

**Step 3** - Set up a comfortable location to conduct your interview. It is best if it is a quiet area where you will not be interrupted. Please note that you may also wish to conduct your interview via Zoom or other virtual conferencing platform if you cannot physically be present with the interviewee.

**Step 4** - Set up your recording device of choice in a secure manor so it is steady and focused on you and your subject. Another option is to focus only on the interviewee and have your conversation from off camera. You may also conduct the interview via Zoom or other virtual conferencing platform.

**Step 5** - When your setup is complete press record and start asking the questions you have in your notes. Give the interviewee time to answer and tell their story. Keep in mind the answers may prompt you to ask new questions or lead the conversation in other directions not included in your notes. If you are conducting the interview via Zoom there is a record feature built into the program for you to document this experience.

**Step 6** - Encourage your interviewee to share past artifacts and photographs to enhance their stories. Make this request in advance of the interview so they are prepared for a show-and-tell during your interview session.



**Step 7** - When you are satisfied with the interview, stop the recording, thank your interviewee and review the footage.

**Step 8** - Edit as you see fit and share with your family!

### **Variations and adaptations:**

A variation of this project, if you are unable to find an available person for an interview, you may wish to interview yourself or use your voice to speak for a pet or favorite stuffed animal or toy. In addition, if equipment to record the interview is unavailable try writing the account.

\*If you have any questions about these art activities  
please e-mail Sue at: [sgirardisw@moafl.org](mailto:sgirardisw@moafl.org)  
Now in her garage making art!

**We'd love to see your artwork!**  
**Take a photo and tag @nsuartmuseum**



**NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale**

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