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Benny Andrews

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Portrait of American artist Benny Andrews (1930 - 2006) as he sits on the floor of his studio, New York, 1970s.
(Photo by Anthony Barboza/Getty Images)

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Host Ruth Bowman, interviews American painter Benny Andrews in this installment of Views on Art.

Over the years, Andrews has been recognized not only as a figural painter working in the Expressionist style, but also as a teacher, an activist, and an advocate for the arts. In the years following this interview, Benny Andrews went on to become the Director of the National Endowment for the Arts, from 1982 - 1984.

The interview begins with a discussion of Andrews' most recent installation at ACA Galleries in New York, a part of his Bicentennial Series. Though reluctant to speak about interpretations of his own work, Andrews does talk about other aspects of his career, from his beginnings in a family of sharecroppers in Madison, Georgia, to his development as an artist and his experiences with art education, both as a student and as a teacher.

Andrews speaks of his love of the challenge in creating a painting series, of not knowing where it will go or how it will turn out. This love of the challenge seems to have extended well beyond his artistic work. Listen in as he describes his work as a professor at Queens College which includes advocating for the integration of various New York City agencies and establishing an art program in the New York state prison system as well as a volunteer program with the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

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