



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Virginia Admiral Papers, 1945-1978, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

To process this collection, this project received Federal support from the Collections Care Initiative Fund, administered by the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative and the National Collections Program.

2020/07/21

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Virginia Admiral papers
Date:	1945-1978
Identifier:	AAA.admivirg
Creator:	Admiral, Virginia, 1915-2000
Extent:	0.6 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of painter and poet Virginia Admiral measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1945-1978. The scattered papers include identification cards, correspondence with artists and friends, personal business records, and printed material. Found are files relating to the Art Workers' Coalition, a group that sought to pressure the Museum of Modern Art and others to implement political and economic reforms to their practices.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Virginia Admiral donated her papers to the Archives of American Art in 1979 and 1980.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, with a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2020, with funding provided by the Collections Care Initiative Fund, administered by the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative and the National Collections Program

Preferred Citation

Virginia Admiral papers, 1945-1978. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to the original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

Biographical / Historical

Virginia Admiral (1915-2000) was a painter and poet based in New York City, New York. She was the ex-wife of Robert De Niro and mother of actor Robert De Niro Jr.

Virginia Admiral was born in Oregon in 1915 and studied at the Art Institute of Chicago. She worked for the Federal Arts Project in Oakland, California in 1938 but enrolled at the Hofmann School in New York City two years later. It was at the Hofmann school, where she studied under its founder Hans Hofmann, that she met fellow artist Robert

De Niro. They married and had a son, Robert De Niro Jr., who would later become an actor. Admiral and De Niro divorced in 1945.

Admiral's work was included in the 1948 Peggy Guggenheim exhibition at the Venice Biennale. Also an activist and a writer, Admiral participated in the anti-Vietnam War movement, and wrote for *True Crimes* magazine. She died in 2000 in New York City, New York.

Scope and Contents

The papers of painter and poet Virginia Admiral measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1945-1978. The scattered papers include identification cards, correspondence with artists and friends, personal business records, and printed material. Found are files relating to the Art Workers' Coalition, a group that sought to pressure the Museum of Modern Art and others to implement political and economic reforms to their practices.

Arrangement

Due to the small size of this collection the papers are arranged as one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Women artists
Women authors
Women painters

Names:

Art Workers Coalition
De Niro, Robert, Sr., 1922-1993
Mapplethorpe, Robert (Robert Michael)
Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)

Occupations:

Authors -- New York (State) -- New York
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
Poets -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Virginia Admiral papers, 1945-1978

0.6 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Virginia Admiral's papers include her identification cards to the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City. Correspondence is with friends, artists, and organizations. Correspondents include Nellie Blaine, Dick Brewer, Bobby Bruber, Fritz Bultman, Betsy Damon, Nancy Desoto, Carol Grosberg, Alex Hay, Ruth Herschberger, Charles James, Frederick Kiesler, Joseph Kosuth, Pat and Rima Lowery, Robert Mapplethorpe, Mark Rothko, Sam Sabrian, Kazuna and Junko Tanaka, and Jack Youngerman.

Personal business records contain scattered receipts for purchased and sold artworks, and information regarding the purchase of land on Ginger Island in the British Virgin Islands.

Files regarding the Art Workers' Coalition include a copy of "Open Hearing" (1969), an unfinished scrapbook of drafts and sample pages to be sent to interested parties. Also found are loose flyers and memoranda.

Printed material includes clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, flyers and press releases, and published works by James Collins, Roger Cutforth, Hall Winslow and a book of poetry by Robert De Niro Sr. Of note is an exhibition catalog from Peggy Guggenheim's participation at the 1948 Venice Biennale.

Box 1, Folder 1 Identification Cards, Museum of Modern Art, 1947, 1957

Box 1, Folder 2 Correspondence, 1956-1978

Box 1, Folder 3 Personal Business Records, 1969-1973

Box 1, Folder 4-6 Art Workers' Coalition Records, 1969-1970s

Box 1, Folder 7 Clippings, 1960s-1970s

Box 1, Folder 8-9 Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1945-1967

Box 2, Folder 1 Flyers and Press Releases, circa 1970s

Box 2, Folder 2-3 Published Works, by Hall Winslow, Robert De Niro, Sr., and Others, 1964-1971

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