



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Audubon Artists Records, 1944-2001, in the Archives of American Art

Stephanie L. Ashley

The Audubon Artists records were processed in 2015 with
funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art

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Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | Audubon Artists records |
| Date: | 1944-2001 |
| Identifier: | AAA.auduarti |
| Creator: | Audubon Artists (New York, N.Y.) |
| Extent: | 6.7 Linear feet |
| Language: | The collection is in English. |
| Summary: | The records of New York based Audubon Artists, a national exhibiting organization of painters, sculptors, and graphic artists, measure 6.7 linear feet and date from 1944-2001. The collection documents the organization's adoption of its constitution and first major expansion in the mid-1940s, and its subsequent growth to the present day. The records include correspondence with artist members, administrative files, exhibition files, financial records, printed material including an almost complete run of annual exhibition catalogs and prospectuses, and photographs of artwork, juries, and other groups involved in the annual exhibitions from the 1970s to 1999. |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The records were donated by Audubon Artists in 1978 (via Mark Freeman, president) and 2001 (via David Pena, president).

Processing Information

The collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid prepared by Stephanie Ashley in 2015, with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art. The Archives of American Art has implemented minimal processing tactics when possible in order to increase information about and access to more of our collections.

Minimal processing included arrangement to the series, subseries, and folder levels. Generally, items within folders were simply verified with folder titles, but not arranged further. Folders within boxes may not be numbered. The collection was rehoused in archival containers and folders, but not all staples and clips were removed.

Preferred Citation

Audubon Artists records, 1944-2001. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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Biographical / Historical

Audubon Artists, a national exhibiting society of painters, sculptors, and graphic artists, was founded in New York, New York, in 1940. The organization took its name from the homestead of John James Audubon where it met in December, 1941, to discuss a less regional name than the one it had initially adopted: Professional Arts Group of Washington Heights. The group's association with Audubon, however, begins and ends with the name.

Audubon Artists held its first exhibition at 8th Street Gallery in April-May, 1942, with an exhibiting group of 22 members. In 1943 the group was able to attract a wider pool of recognized professional artists, and by 1944 the membership had increased to 60 and the organization issued its first annual exhibition catalog with the newly adopted eagle and palette emblem.

A reorganization meeting took place on March 27, 1944, to address the growing responsibilities for the annual exhibition. President Frederic Whitaker subsequently oversaw the creation of the original constitution, the credo and the 1946 incorporation of the organization, and led a membership campaign designed to attract nationally renowned artists of various aesthetic persuasions and gain the organization more prestige.

Since then, Audubon Artists has continued to hold an annual exhibition in a variety of locations throughout New York City, including the National Academy of Design, National Arts Club, and the Salmagundi Club. The latter has been the exhibition's preferred home since 1997, and with circa 350 members Audubon Artists remains a thriving organization dedicated to "artistic progress" today.

Scope and Contents

The records of New York based Audubon Artists, a national exhibiting organization of painters, sculptors, and graphic artists, measure 6.7 linear feet and date from 1944-2001. The collection documents the organization's adoption of its constitution and first major expansion in the mid-1940s, and its subsequent growth to the present day. The records include correspondence with artist members, administrative files, exhibition files, financial records, printed material including an almost complete run of annual exhibition catalogs and prospectuses, and photographs of artwork, juries, and other groups involved in the annual exhibitions from the 1970s to 1999.

Administration and correspondence files document all aspects of the organization's activities and include founding documents; records of individual officers including presidents Domenico Facci, Joseph Domareki, Mark Freeman, Hughie Lee-Smith, Renee McKay and Frederic Whitaker, and historians Michael Engel and Jan Gary; correspondence with members and prospective members including artists such as John Taylor Arms, Thomas Hart Benton, Peter Blume, Stuart Davis, Walt Disney, Lyonel Feininger, Malvina Hoffman, William Meyerowitz, Henry Varnum Poor, Stow Wengenroth, and Stark Young; agenda, meeting minutes and reports to the Executive Board; and the correspondence and related records of various committees.

Exhibition files document a variety of activities related to exhibition planning, and include correspondence, entry forms, information on juries and awards, and lists of selected artwork and award winners.

Financial records include scattered treasurer correspondence and notes, records of bills paid, and some reports, investment and tax records from the 1960s-1990s.

Printed material includes an early brochure issued in 1944, and a brochure on the organization's history by Jan Gary, as well as annual exhibition catalogs and/or prospectuses from 1944 to 2000.

Photographic material consists of copy prints and negatives of photographic material used in the annual exhibition catalogs, including photos of artwork, juries and scattered exhibition installations.

Arrangement

Before processing, much of the collection was unsorted, and there was little indication of original record keeping practices for a large portion of the material. Some of the earlier material from the 1940s had been sorted by name or activity and where possible this arrangement has been maintained. Researchers should be aware, however, that similar types of material such as correspondence, financial, and administrative records, can be found in various places throughout the collection, particularly throughout Series 1. The collection is arranged as 5 series.

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Administration and Correspondence Files, 1944-2000 (2.43 linear feet; Boxes 1-3, OV 9)
- Series 2: Exhibition Files, 1944-1999 (0.67 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 3: Financial Records, 1962-1999 (0.5 linear feet; Box 4)
- Series 4: Printed Material, 1944-2001 (1.7 linear feet; Boxes 4-6)
- Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1969-1999 (0.9 linear feet; Boxes 6-8)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Arms, John Taylor, 1887-1953
Benton, Thomas Hart, 1889-1975
Blume, Peter, 1906-1992
Davis, Stuart, 1892-1964
Disney, Walt, 1901-1966
Domareki, Joseph
Engel, Michael M., 1896-1969
Facci, Domenico, 1916-1994
Feininger, Lyonel, 1871-1956
Freeman, Mark, 1908-
Gary, Jan
Hoffman, Malvina, 1887-1966
Lee-Smith, Hughie
McKay, Renee
Meyerowitz, William, 1887-1981
Poor, Henry Varnum, 1887-1970
Wengenroth, Stow, 1906-
Whitaker, Frederic
Young, Stark, 1881-1963

Occupations:

Artists -- New York (State)

Functions:

Arts organizations -- New York (State)

Container Listing

Series 1: Administration and Correspondence Files, 1944-2000

2.43 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3, OV 9)

Scope and Contents: This series consists of mixed administrative records and correspondence documenting all aspects of the organization's activities. While no records exist from the original meetings of interested parties from 1940-1942, the series does include fragments of the 1946 certificate of incorporation (with a photocopy of the full document), working copies of the constitution and by-laws from 1944-1946 and a 1946 published copy which includes a roll of membership. Subsequent revisions to the constitution from the 1950s-1980s can also be found here.

Correspondence is found throughout the series, but some correspondence of individual presidents, historians, committee chairs and other individuals can also be found in named files. Of particular interest is correspondence documenting Frederic Whitaker's membership campaign to attract nationally renowned artists, which includes dozens of letters to known American artists. These can primarily be found in the general business and correspondence files for the 1940s and includes replies to Whitaker from artists such as Stuart Davis and Lyonel Feininger. The series also houses an honorable mention award presented to Whitaker in October 1945.

Other correspondents during the 1940s include John Taylor Arms, Thomas Hart Benton, Peter Blume, Jon Corbino, Walt Disney, Robert Gwathmey, Raoul Hague, Malvina Hoffman, Peter Hurd, William Meyerowitz, Henry Varnum Poor, Everett Shinn, Benton Spruance, Stow Wengenroth, and Stark Young. There are also numerous letters from presidents who succeeded Whitaker such as Ralph Fabri, Domenico Facci, Mark Freeman, Renee McKay and Hughie Lee-Smith, and the organization's two historians, Michael M. Engel and Jan Gary.

Correspondence related to Eileen and Frederic Whitaker is from Eileen following Frederic's death and includes papers related to a misunderstanding about whether Frederic Whitaker or John J. Karpick was the first president of Audubon Artists.

General correspondence from the 1970s includes documentation of the organization's attempts to secure publicity by means of a promotional video tape submitted to a local cable public access channel.

Also found here are executive board and director's minutes for the 1960s, and some meeting minutes for 1977-1979, 1985 and 1988. Additional scattered agenda, minutes and reports can be found in the general business and correspondence files. The series also includes the correspondence and related records of various committees including those for admissions, awards, and nominations; lists of executive board members, officers, members and associate members; and some financial records.

Arrangement: Folders are arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Box 1, Folder 1 Admissions Committee, 1944-1946

Box 1, Folder 2-4 Admissions Committee, 1963-1966

Box 1, Folder 5 Admissions Committee, circa 1980s-1994

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 6-9 | Agenda, Minutes and Reports, 1960s-1998 |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | Awards Committee, 1944-1946 Notes: Oversized material housed in OV 9 |
| Box 1, Folder 11-14 | Awards Committee, 1964-1968 |
| Box 1, Folder 15-19 | Awards Committee, 1973-1999 |
| Box 1, Folder 20 | Awards, Joe and Emily Lowe Foundation, Inc., 1970s |
| Box 1, Folder 21 | Certificate of Incorporation, Fragments, 1946 |
| Box 1, Folder 22 | Committees, General, 1940s-1960s |
| Box 1, Folder 23-26 | Constitution and By-Laws, 1944-1980s |
| Correspondence by Name/Office | |
| Box 1, Folder 27 | Directors and Vice Presidents, 1944-1945 |
| Box 1, Folder 28 | Domareki, Joseph, President, 1965-1967 |
| Box 1, Folder 29 | Engel, Michael M., Chair of Exhibition Committee, 1944-1945 |
| Box 1, Folder 30-31 | Engel, Michael M., Historian, 1960s-1970s |
| Box 1, Folder 32 | Everett, Len G. (Vice President for Oils), 1980 |
| Box 1, Folder 33-36 | Facci, Domencio, President, 1963-1977 |
| Box 1, Folder 37 | Freeman, Jane, 1945 |
| Box 1, Folder 38 | Freeman, Mark, President, 1976-1981 |
| Box 1, Folder 39 | Gary, Jan, Historian, 1980s |
| Box 1, Folder 40 | Katz, Hilda, Chair of Awards Committee, 1944-1945 |
| Box 1, Folder 41 | Leason, Percy, Chair of Nominating Committee, 1945 |
| Box 1, Folder 42 | Lee-Smith, Hughie, President, 1977-1980 |
| Box 1, Folder 43 | Lee-Smith, Hughie, President, 1981-1982 |
| Box 2, Folder 1-2 | McKay, Renee, President, 1979-1980 |
| Box 2, Folder 3 | Melrose, Alice, 1963 |

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| Box 2, Folder 4 | Metzler, Anna E., Treasurer, 1944-1945 |
| Box 2, Folder 5 | Penny, Carlton, 1944 |
| Box 2, Folder 6 | Roller, Marion, President, 1995-1999 |
| Box 2, Folder 7 | Schaeffer, Rockwell B., 1944-1945 |
| Box 2, Folder 8 | Schrick, Linton F., Secretary, 1944-1945 |
| Box 2, Folder 9 | Stoloff, Carolyn, Publicity, 1983-1984 |
| Box 2, Folder 10 | Whitaker, Eileen and Frederic, 1970s-1980 |
| Box 2, Folder 11 | Demonstrations, 1945 |
| Box 2, Folder 12-15 | Form Letters and Memoranda, 1944-1980s |
| Box 2, Folder 16-19 | General Business and Correspondence Files, 1944-1945 |
| Box 2, Folder 20-26 | General Business and Correspondence Files, 1959-1960s |
| Box 2, Folder 27-31 | General Business and Correspondence Files, 1960s-1970s |
| Box 2, Folder 32-36 | General Business and Correspondence Files, 1980-2000 |
| Box 2, Folder 37 | Letterheads and Blank Certificates, circa 1970s-circa 1980s |
| Box 3, Folder 1 | Lists, Executive Board and Officers, 1980-1989 |
| Box 3, Folder 2 | Lists, Members and Associate Members, 1946-1999 |
| Box 3, Folder 3 | Lists, Officer Duties, circa 1970s-circa 1980s |
| Box 3, Folder 4 | Nominations, 1945 |
| Box 3, Folder 5 | Nominations and Board Directors, 1944 |
| Box 3, Folder 6 | Nominating Committee, 1960s |
| Box 3, Folder 7 | Nominationg Committee (Membership Resignations), 1974 |
| Box 3, Folder 8 | Press Releases, 1963-1965 |
| Box 3, Folder 9 | Reception Committee, 1945 |
| Box 3, Folder 10 | Restricted Legacies, 1980s |

Box 3, Folder 11-15 Slate of Officers and Directors, 1964-1981

Box 3, Folder 16 Stefan Hirsch Memorial Fund, 1966-1967

Oversize 9 Oversized Awards Committee from Box 1, Folder 10

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Series 2: Exhibition Files, 1944-1999

0.66 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: While records concerning exhibitions are scattered throughout the collection, this series consists of files specifically documenting individual annual exhibitions, including those at Lever House in 1986, and on the Federal Hall Site in 1996. Also found are records of juries selected for the 1965-1969 annual exhibitions, and some from the 1970s and 1980s. Records include correspondence, entry cards, exhibition forms, 4 leases from the National Academy of Design from 1963-1966, lists and resumes of exhibition participants, as well as correspondence with participants, and printed material.

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| Box 3, Folder 17 | Entry Cards, 1998 |
| Box 3, Folder 18-19 | Exhibition, 1944-1945 |
| Box 3, Folder 20 | Exhibition, 1958-1959 |
| Box 3, Folder 21 | Exhibitions, 1978-1980s |
| Box 3, Folder 22-24 | Exhibition at Lever House (1986), 1986 |
| Box 3, Folder 25 | Exhibition Awards, 1945 |
| Box 3, Folder 26; Box 3, Folder 22-24 | Exhibition Forms, circa 1965-1967 |
| Box 3, Folder 27 | Exhibition Leases, 1963-1966 |
| Box 3, Folder 28 | Exhibition List, 1999 |
| Box 3, Folder 29 | Exhibition on Federal Hall Site (1996), 1995 |
| Box 3, Folder 30 | Exhibition Printed Material (annotated), 1950s-1980s |
| Box 3, Folder 31-33 | Juries, 1945-1946 |
| Box 3, Folder 34 | Juries, 1970s |
| Box 3, Folder 35 | Juries, 1980s |
| Box 3, Folder 36-43 | Juries, 23rd-27th Annual Exhibitions, 1964-1968 |
| Box 3, Folder 44 | Juries, Annual Exhibition Selection Lists, 1964-1967 |
| Box 3, Folder 45 | Juries, Notes, 1960s |

Box 3, Folder 46-47 Medal of Honor Retrospective (1967), 1946-1966

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Series 3: Financial Records, 1962-1999

0.5 Linear feet (Box 4)

Scope and Contents: Bills paid include receipted invoices, memos, notes, and handwritten spreadsheets tracking expenditures. Also found are financial reports from the organization's accountant, records of investments and statements of assets, some treasurer correspondence and notes, and annual tax forms from 1978-1986.

Additional financial material can be found in Series 1.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Box 4, Folder 1-5 | Bills Paid, 1980s-1999 |
| Box 4, Folder 6 | Bills Paid, Medals and Printing, 1970s-1980s |
| Box 4, Folder 7 | Check Stubs, 1996-1998 |
| Box 4, Folder 8-9 | Financial Reports, 1981-1985 |
| Box 4, Folder 10 | Investment Records, 1992-1999 |
| Box 4, Folder 11 | Invoices, 1980s |
| Box 4, Folder 12 | Member Dues, 1999 |
| Box 4, Folder 13 | Statement of Assets, 1962-1979 |
| Box 4, Folder 14-15 | Tax Records, 1978-1986 |
| Box 4, Folder 16 | Treasurer's Correspondence, 1964-1965 |
| Box 4, Folder 17 | Treasurer's Notes, circa 1980s, 1997 |

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Series 4: Printed Material, 1944-2001

1.7 Linear feet (Boxes 4-6)

Scope and Contents: This series consists primarily of an almost complete run of the organization's annual exhibition catalogs from 1944 to 2000 with the exception of the years 1949, 1969, 1977 and 1992. Filed with the catalogs are "prospectuses" for most of the years from 1973-2001. From 1962 on, catalogs include printed photographs of the awards and selection juries for each exhibition.

Also found are some announcements and invitations for annual exhibitions, a 1944 brochure about the organization, and a brochure written by historian Jan Gary in the 1980s, based largely on work done by former historian Michael M. Engel.

Printed material of other organizations consists of a March 1965 New York Arts Calendar.

Arrangement: Records are arranged alphabetically by folder title. Annual exhibition catalogs are arranged chronologically thereafter.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Box 4, Folder 18 | Announcements and Invitations, 1980-1995 |
| Box 4, Folder 19 | Annual Exhibition Catalogs, Bound Volume, 1953-1962 |
| Box 4, Folder 20-30 | Annual Exhibition Catalogs, 1944-1971 |
| Box 5, Folder 1-26 | Annual Exhibition Catalogs, 1972-2001 |
| Box 6, Folder 1 | Brochure, 1944 |
| Box 6, Folder 2 | Brochure of Audubon Artists History, circa 1980s |
| Box 6, Folder 3 | News Articles, 1947-1999 |
| Box 6, Folder 4 | Newsletter, 1982 |
| Box 6, Folder 5 | Other Organizations, 1965 |

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Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1969-1999

0.9 Linear feet (Boxes 6-8)

Scope and Contents: This series consists primarily of copy prints and negatives of the photographs used in the organization's annual exhibition catalogs. It includes photos and negatives of artwork from the exhibitions, juries, and several exhibition installations.

Arrangement: Photographs are arranged alphabetically by folder title. Annual exhibition catalog photos are arranged chronologically by year thereafter.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Box 6, Folder 6-7 | Annual Exhibition Catalog, circa 1969 |
| Box 6, Folder 8-12 | Annual Exhibition Catalog, 1977-1979 |
| Box 6, Folder 13-35 | Annual Exhibition Catalog, 1980-1987 |
| Box 7, Folder 1-10 | Annual Exhibition Catalog, 1987-1989 |
| Box 7, Folder 11-13 | Annual Exhibition Catalog, circa 1990-1991 |
| Box 8, Folder 1-2 | Annual Exhibition Catalog, 1991, 1999 |
| Box 8, Folder 3 | Award Winners, circa 1970s-circa 1980s |
| Box 8, Folder 4 | Exhibition Installations, circa 1970s-circa 1980s |
| Box 8, Folder 5-6 | Group and Individual Portraits, circa 1970s-circa 1990s |

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