



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Forrest Bess letters to L. E. and Patricia Cooke, circa 1963-1964

Stephanie Ashley

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Forrest Bess letters to L. E. and Patricia Cooke
Date:	circa 1963-1964
Identifier:	AAA.bessforr
Creator:	Bess, Forrest, 1911-1977
Extent:	0.01 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Forrest Bess letters to L.E. and Patricia Cooke, date from circa 1963-1964 and consist of photocopies of two letters and twelve slides of two paintings. Bess writes concerning two paintings owned by the Cookes, and discusses Carl Jung, and the reactions of the unconscious to Bess's work.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated 1986 by Patricia (Mrs. L.E.) Cooke as part of AAA's Texas Project.

Location of Originals

Original letters are in the possession of the donor.

Related Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds the Forrest Bess photographs and slides, the Forrest Bess letters, the Dana Friis-Hansen papers on Forrest Bess, the Louis Waldman research material on Forrest Bess, and the Rosalie Berkowitz papers relating to Forrest Bess.

Available Formats

The collection was digitized in 2021 and is available on the Archives of American Art website.

Processing Information

The collection received preliminary processing by T. James on April 5, 1986, and was microfilmed on Reel 3752. The collection was processed and described in a finding aid by Stephanie Ashley, and digitized, in 2021.

Restrictions

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

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Forrest Bess (1911-1977) was a painter and fisherman in Bay City, Texas, known for his generally small, abstract, biomorphic paintings, and his ideas on the merging of masculine and feminine energy. L.E. and Patricia Cooke were art collectors.

Although Bess lived much of his life in relative isolation, he was represented by Betty Parsons in New York, and his work received renewed interest after a 1981 solo show at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Although most of his paintings are in private collections, his work can be found in museums including the Menil Collection, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Art, and others.

Scope and Contents

The Forrest Bess letters to L.E. and Patricia Cooke, date from circa 1963-1964 and consist of photocopies of two letters and twelve slides of two paintings. Bess writes concerning two paintings owned by the Cookes, and discusses Carl Jung, and the reactions of the unconscious to Bess's work.

Arrangement

Due to the small size of the collection, the letters 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:

Names:

Cooke, L. E. (L. Ezra)
Cooke, Patricia J.

Occupations:

Painters -- Texas -- Bay City

Container Listing

Series 1: Forrest Bess Letters to L. E. and Patricia Cooke, circa 1963-1964

Folder 1 [Letters and Slides, circa 1963-1964](#)

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