



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Lester Burbank Bridaham papers

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Lester Burbank Bridaham papers
Identifier:	AAA.bridlest
Date:	1912-1986
Creator:	Bridaham, Lester Burbank
Extent:	7.4 Linear feet ((partially microfilmed on 2 reels))
Language:	Some material in Julio De Diego files are in Spanish.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated 1974-1987 by Lester Burbank and Dorothy Bridaham. In 1996, an additional 0.8 ft. was donated from the Jeanette Fowler estate.

Location of Originals

Writings by Kimon Nicolaidis: Location of originals unknown.

Related Materials

Lester Bridaham photographs and papers relating to gargoyles, 1895-1987, are located at The Getty Research Institute Special Collections.

Available Formats

35mm microfilm reels 3 and 8 available at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Reproduction Note

Writings by Kimon Nicolaidis are photocopies.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center. Microfilmed materials must be consulted on microfilm.

Biographical / Historical

Museum director, art historian, painter, and printmaker; d. 1992. Bridaham received a degree in chemical engineering from M.I.T. and studied art history at Harvard's Fogg Museum from 1936-1937. He received a 1931 American Field Service fellowship for study in France and Morocco, and studied studio art at the Art Students League under Kimon Nicolaidis and Kenneth Hayes Miller. Between 1938 and 1954, Bridaham was a staff officer at the Art Institute of Chicago. He was also the director of the Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans, and of the Strathmont Museum, Elmira, N.Y. He is the author of *Gargoyles*, *Chimeras* and *the Grotesque in French Gothic Sculpture*.

Scope and Contents

Correspondence, writings, art works, scrapbooks, printed material, photographs, and files on Julio De Diego and Kimon Nicolaidis and other topics, related to Bridaham's career as an artist and writer.

Scope and Contents

REEL 8: Printed material, including articles written by Bridaham for periodicals (1950-1957), 15 exhibition catalogs (1928-1968), clippings by and about Bridaham (1930-1959), 6 press releases (1956-1957), a transcript of a radio discussion which included Bridaham (1951), 2 advertisements, a lecture announcement (1957), instructions on using egg tempera for Bridaham's students, a guide book to the Louisiana State Museum (1956), brochures about Strathmont Museum (1958), and resumes.

Scope and Contents

REEL 3: Material related to Kimon Nicolaidis, including a radio address given by him, 1933; publicity for his book *THE NATURAL WAY TO DRAW*; exhibition catalogs; clippings; press releases; and a photograph of one of his sculptures. [Microfilm title: Kimon Nicolaidis papers]

Scope and Contents

UNMICROFILMED: Correspondence with Kimon Nicolaidis and Henry Schnackenberg (1921-1923), Julio De Diego (1941-1952), Ethel Spears (1961), Isabel Bishop (1975), and George and Edith Rickey. Letters to Mamie Harmon concern a Nicolaidis exhibition and book (1938-1941). Writings include nine v. of diaries (1946-1954) kept during his tenure at the Art Institute of Chicago, and notes and drafts for an unpublished book (1938-1982).

Scope and Contents

Subject files concerning Ivan Albright's poetry, the Colonial Craft Survey for Massachusetts (1935), Olof Krans (1939), the reorganization of the Metropolitan Museum's photographic department (1949), Romanesque and Gothic sculpture and the Society for Contemporary American Art. A file (1921-1983) on Julio De Diego contains Bridaham's research materials, sketches and drawings by the artist, a journal kept by De Diego in New York (1932) and photographs of De Diego, his family including third wife Gypsy Rose Lee, friends and art works. Kimon Nicolaidis' file (1921-1986) contains his writings and drawings (1928), drawings by Vivian Gordon and Howard Ahrens (1923-1986), photographs and other research materials.

Scope and Contents

Printed materials consists of clippings (1930-1972), "The Chicago Artist" newsletter (1938), press releases, a book cover, Artists Equity publications (1952-1953), posters, exhibition catalogs and announcements and membership cards. Photographs show Bridaham, friends, National Art Week activities with Macena Barton, Charles Biesel, Jules Eboli and Richard Florsheim, his studio and drawings (1928-1949). Other materials include over 150 prints and drawings (1927-1977) of Moroccan scenes, Colorado wildflowers and other subjects, resumes, an illustrated notebook of Bridaham's plans for art works (1931-1932) and a list of his works (1974).

Scope and Contents

ADDITION: Material concerning the latter part of Bridaham's life, including original works of art, photographs, a dream sketchbook (1945), a notebook devoted to Julio de Diego; Bridaham's letters to Jeanette Fowler, 1989-1990 and other correspondence, 1940s-1950s; and printed material.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art, Modern -- 20th century -- United States
Mural painting and decoration

Types of Materials:

Drawings
Scrapbooks
Sketchbooks

Names:

Albright, Ivan, 1897-1983
Art Institute of Chicago
Barton, Macena, 1901-1986
Biesel, Charles, 1865-1945
Bishop, Isabel, 1902-1988
Colonial Craft Survey for Massachusetts
De Diego, Julio, 1900-
Eboli, Jules
Florsheim, Richard A., 1916-1979
Krans, Olof, 1838-1916
Lee, Gypsy Rose, 1914-1970
Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.)
Nicolaiades, Kimon, 1892-1938
Rickey, George
Schnakenberg, H. E. (Henry Ernest), 1892-1970
Society for Contemporary American Art
Spears, Ethel, 1903-1974

Occupations:

Art historians
Art teachers
Museum directors
Painters -- United States
Printmakers