



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Elizabeth Catlett Papers, 1957-1980, in the Archives of American Art

Rayna Andrews

Funding for the processing of this collection
was provided by the Henry Luce Foundation.

2018/04/05

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | Elizabeth Catlett papers |
| Date: | 1957-1980 |
| Identifier: | AAA.catleliz |
| Creator: | Catlett, Elizabeth, 1915-2012 |
| Extent: | 0.3 Linear feet |
| Language: | The collection is in English and Spanish. |
| Summary: | The papers of African American painter, printmaker, and sculptor Elizabeth Catlett measure 0.3 linear feet and date from 1957 to 1980. The collection consists of printed material, such as project-related press; exhibition announcements, catalogs, and posters; publications featuring articles about Catlett; clippings; and cards featuring reproductions of Catlett's work. |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The papers were donated to the Archives of American Art by Elizabeth Catlett in 1980. They were microfilmed as part of the Archives of American Art's Texas project in 1981.

Related Materials

Elizabeth Catlett papers are also located at the Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

Available Formats

The collection is available on 35 mm microfilm reel 2249 as part of the Archives of American Art's Texas project. The reels are only available through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Rayna Andrews in 2018 with funding from the Henry Luce Foundation.

Preferred Citation

Elizabeth Catlett papers, 1957-1980. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

Biographical / Historical

Elizabeth Catlett (1915-2012) was an African American painter, printmaker, and sculptor. She was born and raised in Washington, D.C. and attended Howard University after being denied admission to the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University) due to her race. At Howard she studied under Loïs Mailou Jones and Alain Locke. She later studied with Grant Wood and Henry Stinson while pursuing her masters of fine arts at the University of Iowa. When she graduated in 1940, she was one of the first three students, and the only African American woman, to earn that degree from the university.

In 1946 Catlett was awarded a Rosenwald Fellowship to travel to Mexico with her husband, artist Charles White. The couple divorced that same year. In 1947, Catlett joined the Taller de Gráfica Popular, an artist's print collective devoted to leftist social causes. There she met printmaker and muralist Francisco Mora, whom she married. Catlett taught at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) from 1958 until her retirement in 1975. She divided her time between New York and Mexico. Catlett continued to produce artwork until her death in 2012. Her work is held in many notable collections such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Museum in Prague, and the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City.

Scope and Contents

The papers of African American painter, printmaker, and sculptor Elizabeth Catlett measure 0.3 linear feet and date from 1957 to 1980. The collection consists of printed material, such as project-related press; exhibition announcements, catalogs, and posters; publications featuring articles about Catlett; clippings; and cards featuring reproductions of Catlett's work. Some of the exhibition materials and clippings, as well as the publication *gente* are in Spanish.

Arrangement

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

- Series 1: Elizabeth Catlett papers, 1957-1980 (Box 1, OV 2; 0.3 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

African American artists
Women artists
Women painters
Women printmakers
Women sculptors

Occupations:

Painters -- Mexico
Painters -- New York (State)
Printmakers -- Mexico
Printmakers -- New York (State)
Sculptors -- Mexico

Sculptors -- New York (State)

Container Listing

Series 1: Elizabeth Catlett Papers, 1957-1980

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 2)

Scope and Contents: The collection consists of printed material, such as project-related press; exhibition announcements, catalogs, and posters; publications featuring articles about Catlett; clippings; and cards featuring reproductions of Catlett's work. Some of the exhibition materials and clippings, as well as the publication *gente* are in Spanish.

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| Box 1, Folder 1 | Materials Related to Unveiling of Students Aspire sculpture at Howard University School of Engineering, 1978 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Exhibition and Lecture Announcements, Catalogs, Etc., 1957, 1970-1975 |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Exhibition and Lecture Announcements, Catalogs, Etc., 1976-1980 |
| Box OV 2 | Oversized Exhibition Posters, 1972-1975, 1980 |
| Box OV 2 | Oversized Publication — Ebony vol.XXV no.3, 1970 January |
| Box OV 2 | Oversized Publication — gente no.103, 1970 April |
| Box OV 2 | Oversized Publication — Tuesday At Home, 1974 December |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Black Art: An International Quarterly vol. 1, no. 1, 1976 |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Clippings, 1970-1978 Notes: Oversized material housed in OV 2. |
| Box OV 2 | Oversized Clippings, 1967, 1970-1979 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Cards Featuring Reproductions of Catlett's Work, undated |

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