



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Cinque Gallery
Records, 1959-2010, bulk 1976-2004,
in the Archives of American Art

Harriet E. Shapiro and Rihoko Ueno

Funding for the digitization of this collection was
provided by the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

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

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Cinque Gallery records
Identifier:	AAA.cinqgall2
Date:	1959-2010, bulk 1976-2004
Extent:	1.1 Linear feet
Creator:	Cinque Gallery
Language:	English .
Summary:	The records of the New York City-based Cinque Gallery, a nonprofit organization, measure 1.1 linear feet and date from 1959 to 2010, with the bulk of materials dating from 1976 to 2004. The gallery's mission was to exhibit African American artists, to educate the public about their work, and to offer art programs to the community. This is documented by administrative records, artists' files, financial and legal records, printed material, and photographs. Materials dated before and after the gallery's years of operation relate to African American community organizations and were compiled by former Cinque Gallery Executive Director, Ruth Jett.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The records were donated to the Archives of American Art in 2013 by Ruth M. Jett, former Executive Director of Cinque Gallery.

Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2019 and is available on the Archives of American Art website. Materials which have not been scanned include blank pages, blank versos of photographs, and duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages scanned.

Processing Information

The collection was processed to a minimal level by Harriet E. Shapiro in 2014. The collection was fully processed, prepared for digitization, and described in a finding aid by Rihoko Ueno in 2019 with funding provided by the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

Preferred Citation

Cinque Gallery records, 1959-2010. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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.

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Biographical / Historical

The Cinque Gallery (est. 1969, closed 2004) was a nonprofit art gallery in New York City founded by African American artists Romare Bearden, Norman Lewis, and Ernest Crichlow. It was established to exhibit the work of both new and established African American artists, and to provide community educational programs.

In 1981, co-founder Ernest Crichlow invited Ruth Jett, an accomplished administrator and long-time arts supporter, to serve on the gallery's Board of Directors. One year later, Jett was appointed Executive Director of Cinque Gallery. Jett has been described as the glue that held the Cinque Gallery together during its prodigious programs and exhibitions of the 1980s and 1990s.

Cinque sponsored more than 350 exhibitions in a number of New York City venues, as well as travelling exhibitions in the New York and New England areas before closing in 2004. The Gallery was funded by public and individual contributors, such as the Romare Bearden Foundation, Philip Morris Companies and the Andy Warhol Foundation.

Although Cinque Gallery closed its doors in 2004, some of its central programs are still continued by the Romare Bearden Foundation in New York City.

Scope and Contents

The records of the New York City-based Cinque Gallery, a nonprofit organization, measure 1.1 linear feet and date from 1959 to 2010, with the bulk of materials dating from 1976 to 2004. The gallery's mission was to exhibit African American artists, to educate the public about their work, and to offer art programs to the community. This is documented by administrative records, artists' files, financial and legal records, printed material, and photographs. Materials dated before and after the gallery's years of operation relate to African American community organizations and were compiled by former Cinque Gallery Executive Director, Ruth Jett.

Administrative records consist of a broad range of material such as gallery history, an organizational outline, by-laws and articles, assorted forms, correspondence, mailing lists, and fundraising materials. Correspondence is mostly addressed to Executive Director Ruth Jett regarding business operations and funding efforts.

Artists' files consists of resumes, biographical statements, clippings, exhibition catalogs and announcements related to Cinque Gallery founders as well as other artists. Notable artists include Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow, Norman Lewis, Nadine DeLawrence, Joanne McFarland, Virginia Evans Smit, and many others.

Financial and legal records include bank statements, tax records, budget projections, price lists, ledgers, and contribution receipts.

Printed material consists of announcements, invitations, and catalogs of group and solo exhibitions held at Cinque Gallery. Some of the artists featured in the exhibitions are Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow, Edward Clark, and Charles Alston. Also found are a brochure, newsletter, press releases, and clippings. Other printed items relating to Cinque Gallery are a brochure, exhibition reviews, and clippings.

Photographs are mostly of Cinque Gallery events, exhibition openings and galas. Some of the photographs have annotations on the verso. Among the identified individuals are Ernest Crichlow, Ruth Jett, Romare Bearden, and Norman Lewis. This series also contains a small number of negatives and a few slides of artwork.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 5 series:

- Series 1: Administrative Records, 1969-2010 (Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 2: Artists' Files, 1983-2009 (Box 1, OV 2; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 3: Financial and Legal Records, 1969-2005 (Box 1; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 4: Printed Material, 1959-2007, bulk 1976-2007 (Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 5: Photographs, circa 1987-2003 (Box 1, OV 2; 0.2 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
Artist-run galleries -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Bearden, Romare, 1911-1988
Crichlow, Ernest, 1914-2005
Jett, Ruth M.
Lewis, Norman, 1909-1979

Functions:

Art galleries -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Administrative Records, 1969-2010

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

This series consists of a broad range of administrative material such as a Cinque Gallery banner, information on the gallery's history, by-laws and articles, administrative forms, correspondence, mailing lists, and fundraising materials. Correspondence mostly involves business operations and funding efforts. Many of the letters are addressed to Executive Director Ruth Jett. Other records include a detailed subject outline of Gallery operations, research proposals, development efforts, and program ideas. There also is a file on the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture that includes an old membership directory.

The materials in this series are arranged in alphabetical order.

The bulk of this series has been digitized. Materials which have not been scanned include blank pages and duplicates. The Cinque Gallery banner in folder 5 was also not digitized due to the size.

Box 1, Folder 1	Administration and Operations Outline, circa 2000 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 2	Art Inventory, circa 2002 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 3	By-Laws and Articles, circa 1980-circa 2000 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 4	Certificate of Incorporation (Partial Photocopy), 1969 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 5	Cinque Gallery Banner, circa 2000-circa 2004
Box 1, Folder 6	Cinque Gallery History, circa 1984-2004 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence, 1970-2008 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 8	Fundraising Material, 1987-2004 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 9	Lenox Terrace Association Research Proposal, circa 2009 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 10	Mailing Lists, 1976-2004

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 11 Rental Agreement, 1993-1994

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 12 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1988-2010

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 13 Various Administrative and Exhibition Forms, circa 1990-circa 2000

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 14 Miscellaneous Material, circa 1987-2004

[Image\(s\)](#)

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Series 2: Artists' Files, 1983-2009

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 2)

This series consists of resumes, biographical statements, clippings, exhibition catalogs and announcements related to Cinque Gallery founders (Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow, and Norman Lewis) as well as other artists. Notable artists include Charles Alston, Michael Cummings, Carl Davis, Nadine DeLawrence, Robin Holder, Jacob Lawrence, Joanne McFarland, Virginia Evans Smit, and many others.

The materials in this series are arranged in alphabetical order.

The bulk of this series has been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages, blank versos of photographs, and duplicates.

Box 1, Folder 15	Alston, Charles, 1990 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 16	Bearden, Romare, 1986-2007 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 17	Brooks, Kathleen - Clark, Edward, 1999-circa 2002 Image(s) Include material on Kathleen Brooks, Ivy Carter, Elizabeth Catlett, and Edward Clark
Box 1, Folder 18	Crichlow, Ernest, 1999-2005 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 19	Cummings, Michael A., circa 1995-2002 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 20	Davis, Carl, circa 1994-2005 Image(s) Oversized material housed in OV 2, Folder 1.
Box OV 2, Folder 1	Oversized Carl Davis Catalog, circa 1994 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 21	De Lawrence, Nadine and Sam Gilliam, 1992-circa 2000 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 22	Holder, Robin, 1987-2003 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 23	Huggins, Kimyon and Barry Charles Johnson, circa 1995-circa 2003 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 24	Jones, Lois Maillou, 1983-2005

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 25

Lawrence, Jacob, 1993-2004

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 26

Lee-Smith - Loving, 1990-2009

[Image\(s\)](#)

Includes material on Hughie Lee-Smith, Norman Lewis, and Al Loving

Box 1, Folder 27

McFarland, JoAnne, 2001-2003

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 28

Pace, Lorenzo, circa 1989

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 29

Ramsaran, Helen Evans and Gail Shaw-Clemons, 2001-2002

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 30

Smit, Virginia Evans, circa 2004

[Image\(s\)](#)

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Series 3: Financial and Legal Records , 1969-2005

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

This series includes bank statements, tax records, budget projections, exhibition price lists, and carbon copies of contribution receipts. There are also reports prepared for the New York State Council on the Arts and ledger pages.

The material in this series is arranged in alphabetical order.

Only part of this series has been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include duplicates, bank statements, contribution receipts, and tax records.

Box 1, Folder 31	Bank Statements and Checks, 1989-1999
Box 1, Folder 32	Budget Records, circa 1990-2005 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 33	Contribution Receipts, 1989-1992
Box 1, Folder 34	Contribution Receipts, 1992-1994
Box 1, Folder 35	Contribution Receipts, 1995-1996
Box 1, Folder 36	Contribution Receipts, 1998-2004
Box 1, Folder 37	Exhibition Checklists with Prices, circa 1995-2003 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 38	Financial Reports and Ledger Sheets, 1986-2003 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 39	Tax Records, 1971-2000

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Series 4: Printed Material, 1959-2007 (bulk 1976-2007)

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

This series includes announcements, invitations, and catalogs of group and solo exhibitions held at Cinque Gallery. Some of the artists featured in the exhibitions are Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow, Edward Clark, and Charles Alston. Also found are gallery press releases and a newsletter. Other printed items relating to Cinque Gallery are a brochure, exhibition reviews, and clippings. Of the other miscellaneous printed items, an invitation from the American Society of African Culture to attend its 1959 Conference of Negro Writers is of particular note.

The material in this series is arranged in alphabetical order.

The bulk of this series has been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages and duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages digitized.

Box 1, Folder 40	Brochure, circa 2000 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 41	Clippings about Cinque Gallery, 1986-1989, 2002 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 42	Exhibition Announcements, 1983-1988 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 43	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1990-1999 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 44	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 2000-2003 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 45	Press Releases and Newsletter, 1969, 1990-1999 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 46	Miscellaneous Printed Items about Other Galleries and Foundations, circa 1959-2007 Image(s)

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Series 5: Photographs, circa 1987-2003

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 2)

Photographs are mostly Cinque Gallery events, its founders, and Ruth Jett. Events include the gallery's 2001 gala, the 1990 Crichlow exhibition opening, a program for children, and a dinner honoring artists. Nearly all the photographs are snapshots of gatherings of people at exhibition openings, rather than formal portraits. Among the identified individuals are Ernest Crichlow, Ruth Jett, Romare Bearden, and Norman Lewis. Some of the photographs have annotations on the verso identifying individuals or the event. This series also contains a small number of negatives, mostly of the 2001 gala; and 35mm color slides of artwork, mainly by A. W. Cowans. Aside from the slides, there are almost no photographs of exhibition installations or artwork, aside from what is visible in the background of some images.

Photographs of Ruth Jett and other artists are at the beginning of the series. The rest of the series is arranged alphabetically by event.

The bulk of this series has been digitized. Materials that have not been digitized include duplicates and blank versos of photographs.

Box 1, Folder 47	Ruth Jett, Norman Lewis, Ernest Crichlow and Others, 1992-circa 2003 Image(s) Oversized material housed in OV 2, Folder 2.
Box OV 2, Folder 2	Oversized Photographs of Ruth Jett and Others, 1992 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 48	25th Anniversary Celebration, 1994 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 49	Artwork Slides, 1992-1998 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 50	Children's Program Event and <i>Black Cowboys</i> Show, circa 1995 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 51	Cinque Gallery Gala at Joseph Papp Public Theater, 2001 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 52	Cinque Gallery Gala at Joseph Papp Public Theater, 2001 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 53	Edward Clark Studio Exhibition and Unidentified Gallery Event, circa 1990-circa 2003 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 54	Ernest Crichlow Exhibition Opening, 1990 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 55	Oak Bluffs Gathering, circa 1995-circa 2003

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 56

Pinderhughes Dinner, 1992

[Image\(s\)](#)

possibly a dinner for the photographer John Pinderhughes

Box 1, Folder 57

Various Cinque Gallery Openings and Events, circa 1987-circa 2000

[Image\(s\)](#)

Includes photographs of Ernest Crichlow, Norman Lewis, Romare Bearden, and others

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