



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Elisabeth Commanday Papers, 1949-1975, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

Processing of this collection received support from
the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Elisabeth Commanday papers
Date:	1949-1975
Identifier:	AAA.commelis
Creator:	Commanday, Elisabeth, 1890-1994
Extent:	0.4 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The scattered papers of art collector Elisabeth Commanday measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1949 to 1974. The collection relates to longtime friendships between Commanday and art historian Bernard Berenson, his sister Elizabeth Berenson, his companion Nicky Mariano, and Mariano's sister Baroness Alda von Anrep. The papers include correspondence, notes, photographs, and printed material.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated 1993 by Maurice Commanday, son of Elisabeth Commanday. Commanday corresponded with Berenson for nearly ten years. At his death in 1959, Berenson's companion Nicky Mariano returned to Commanday all of her letters, which she discarded, except for the earliest letter written in April 1949.

Available Formats

The collection is available on 35mm microfilm reel 5054 at Archives of American Art offices and 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 Jayna Josefson in 2022 with support from the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

Preferred Citation

Elisabeth Commanday papers, 1949-1975. 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

Art collector Elisabeth (Betty) Krieger Commanday (1891-1994) lived in New York City and Boston, Massachusetts. She travelled throughout Europe and maintained a correspondence with art historian Bernard Berenson.

Scope and Contents

The scattered papers of art collector Elisabeth Commanday measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1949 to 1974. The collection relates to longtime friendships between Commanday and art historian Bernard Berenson, his sister Elizabeth Berenson, his companion Nicky Mariano and Mariano's sister Baroness Alda von Anrep. Found is correspondence, notes, photographs, and printed material.

Arrangement

Due to the small size of this collection the papers 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:

Subjects:

Art -- Collectors and collecting

Names:

Anrep, Alda
Berenson, Bernard, 1865-1959
Berenson, Elizabeth
Mariano, Nicky

Occupations:

Collectors

Container Listing

Series 1: Elisabeth Commanday Papers, 1949-1975

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Found are letters written between Elisabeth Commanday, Bernard Berenson, Elizabeth (Bessie) Berenson, Nicky Mariano, and Baroness Alda von Anrep. The letters are mostly personal in nature, discussing travel and day-to-day life. Also included are letters from Commanday to various friends written while traveling in Europe in 1958, and mentioning her visits to I Tatti. Notes concern Bessie Berenson and a trip to Europe. Photographs depict Bessie Berenson, Nicky Mariano, I Tatti, and Commanday. Printed materials consist of articles and obituaries regarding Berenson and Mariano.

Box 1, Folder 1	Correspondence, General, 1954-1960
Box 1, Folder 2	Correspondence, Berenson, Bernard, 1949-1958
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, Berenson, Elizabeth (Bessie), 1966-1975
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence, Mariano, Nicky, 1954-1968
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence, von Anrep, Baroness Alda, 1960-1974
Box 1, Folder 6	Notes, circa 1960
Box 1, Folder 7	Photographs, 1950s-1960
Box 1, Folder 8	Printed Material, 1949-1968

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