A Finding Aid to the George Constant Papers, 1912-2007, bulk 1932-1978, in the Archives of American Art

Judy Ng

Funding for the processing of this collection was provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art

February 22, 2011
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### Collection Overview

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<th>Repository:</th>
<th>Archives of American Art</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>George Constant papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifier:</td>
<td>AAA.consgeor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>1912-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(bulk 1932-1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent:</td>
<td>4.6 Linear feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator:</td>
<td>Constant, George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td>Multiple languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English and Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English; Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary:</td>
<td>The papers of modernist painter and printmaker George Constant measure 4.6 linear feet and date from 1912-2007, with the bulk of the material dating from 1932-1978. They consist of biographical material, inventories of artwork, audio interviews and recorded statements on art, personal and business related correspondence, holiday cards, printed material, an exhibition related video recording, and photographs of Constant, his family and friends, and his work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Administrative Information

#### Acquisition Information

The papers of George Constant were donated by the artist in 1969 and 1978. Additional materials were donated in 2001 and 2007 by his daughter Georgette Preston.

#### Available Formats

All of the sound and video recordings in this collection were digitized for research access in 2011 and are available at the Archives of American Art offices. Researchers may view the original cassettes for the archival notations on them, but original cassettes are not available for playback due to fragility.

#### Processing Information

George Constant's donations from 1969 were originally microfilmed on reels N69-77 and N69-125; these reels are no longer in circulation. The 2007 final addition was merged with earlier accessions and the entire collection was fully processed, arranged, and described by Judy Ng in February 2011 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.
Preferred Citation


Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

The George Constant papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical Note

Greek American George Zachary Constant (1892-1978) worked from his studios in Shinnecock Hills, and New York City, New York as a painter and printmaker. A founder and lifelong member of the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors, Constant worked for the Work Projects Administration (WPA) during the Depression and early years of World War II, and exhibited regularly at major galleries and museums from the 1920s to 1970s.

Born in Arahova, Greece, Constant was raised by his two uncles after the death of his parents in 1896. In school and at the monastery one of his uncles led, Constant showed an early interest in classical Greek aesthetics. At the age of eighteen, he immigrated to the United States and continued his art studies at Washington University before transferring to the Art Institute of Chicago. From 1918 to 1922, Constant taught at the Dayton Art Institute and continued to produce and exhibit his work locally. In 1922, he moved to New York, joined the Society of Independent Painters, and became close friends with Society founder and art critic Walter Pach. During the 1920s, his etchings were shown at the Valentine and Downtown Galleries, and at the New Art Circle of J.B. Neumann, where he presented his first one man gallery show in 1929.

From the 1930s to 1940s, Constant produced prints, watercolors, and oil paintings for the WPA, many of which were purchased by museums and public institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Philadelphia Museum. During this same period, Constant exhibited his work at the Boyer Gallery in the late 1930s, and at the Ferargil Gallery from the 1940s to early 1950s. In the decade between 1955 and 1965, Constant also worked on color and set design for seventeen dance productions created by the choreographer Alwin Nikolais. In the last two decades of his career, Constant produced works from his studio in Shinnecock Hills, New York and continued to exhibit at numerous galleries, including Grace Borgenicht Gallery, Guild Hall, Mari Galleries, Tirca Karlis Gallery, and Artium Gallery.

Scope and Contents

The papers of modernist painter and printmaker George Constant measure 4.6 linear feet and date from 1912-2007, with the bulk of the material dating from 1932-1978. They consist of biographical material, inventories of artwork, audio interviews and recorded statements on art, personal and business related correspondence, holiday cards, printed material, an exhibition related video recording, and photographs of Constant, his family and friends, and his work. A small portion of the correspondence and printed materials are written in Greek.
Biographical material includes artist statements written and recorded by Constant, two audio interview recordings discussing his philosophies on art and his work, inventories of artwork, personal property deeds and legal correspondence, and other miscellaneous material.

Correspondence is predominantly in the form of business and personal letters, postcards, and holiday cards received from family and friends. These include correspondence from Constant's daughter, Georgette Preston, and extended family members. Other frequent personal correspondents include Milton and Sally Avery, Lewis Balamuth, Margaret Brunning, David Burliuk, Nathaniel Burwash, Rhys Caparn, Julia Shaw Patterson Carnell, Philip Cavanaugh, Morris Davidson, Charles Eaton, Vilko Gecan, Marchal Landgren, Roy Neuberger, Walter Pach, Nell Perret, Constantine Pougialis, Wallace Putnam and Consuelo Kanaga, Hi Simons, and Helen Slosberg. Business related correspondents include Audubon Artists, Art Institute of Chicago, Brooklyn Museum, Carnegie Institute, Dayton Art Institute, Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors, Ferargil Galleries, Guild Hall, Heckscher Museum, Lyman Allyn Museum, Metropolitan Museum, Museum of Modern Art, Spanish Refugee Appeal, and the Whitney Museum. Other business correspondence related to Constant's work with the WPA are also included in the series.

Printed material includes books and booklets on American and Greek art, including a limited print edition of *George Constant* by George Constant, clippings and articles reviewing Constant's work, exhibition announcements and catalogs of Constant's shows, periodicals profiling his artwork, and dance and theater related programs that Constant consulted on.

Photographs include black and white prints of Constant and his family and friends in St. Louis, Missouri, Dayton, Ohio, and in and around his studio in Shinnecock Hills, New York. The collection also includes photo stills from his 1965 exhibition at the Parrish Art Museum and a comprehensive set of black and white prints, a handful of color prints, and several color slide sheets of Constant's artwork from the 1920s to 1978.

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**Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into 4 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1923-2007 (Box 1; 17 folders)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1930-1979 (Box 1-2; 1.4 linear feet)
- Series 3: Printed Material, 1927-2005 (Box 2-3; 2 linear feet)
- Series 4: Photographic Material, 1912-1978 (Box 4-6; 1 linear foot)

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**Names and Subject Terms**

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

**Subjects:**
- Art -- Philosophy
- Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
- Painting. Modern -- 20th century -- New York (State) -- New York
- Printmakers -- New York (State) -- New York

**Types of Materials:**
- Christmas cards
- Interviews
Photographs  
Sound recordings  
Video recordings

Names:
Art Institute of Chicago  
Audubon Artists (New York, N.Y.)  
Avery, Milton, 1885-1965  
Avery, Sally  
Brooklyn Museum  
Burliuk, David, 1882-1967  
Caparn, Rhys, 1909-1997  
Carnegie Institute  
Carnell, Julia Shaw Patterson, 1863-1944  
Davidson, Morris, 1898-1979  
Dayton Art Institute  
Eaton, Charles Warren, 1857-1937  
Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors  
Ferargil Galleries  
Gecan, Vilko, 1894-1973  
Heckscher Museum  
Kanaga, Consuelo, 1894-  
Landgren, Marchal E.  
Lyman Allyn Art Museum  
Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.)  
Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)  
Neuberger, Roy R.  
Pach, Walter, 1883-1958  
Parrish Art Museum  
Perret, Nell, 1916-  
Preston, Georgette  
Putnam, Wallace, 1899-1989  
Spanish Refugee Aid (Organization)  
United States. Works Progress Administration  
Whitney Museum of American Art
# Container Listing

## Series 1: Biographical Material, 1923-2007

Biographical material includes artist statements written and read by Constant, two interview sound cassette recordings discussing his philosophies on art and his work, inventories of artwork owned by individuals, museums, and the George Constant Foundation, a notebook inventory of all Constant's oil paintings by rough date, personal property deeds for land owned in Shinnecock Hills and New York City, New York, and New London, Connecticut, and other personal legal documents. This series also includes a certificate of award from the Audubon Artists, Constant's curriculum vitae, three pages from a personal notebook that include a pen and ink sketch, and two passes to WPA buildings.

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<th>Box 1, Folder 1</th>
<th>Artist Statements, 1950-1978</th>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 2</td>
<td>Certificate of Award, Audubon Artists, 1955</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 3</td>
<td>Collectors, George Constant Foundation, 2007</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 4</td>
<td>Collectors, Individuals, 1960, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 5</td>
<td>Collectors, Museums, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 7</td>
<td>Family Related Funeral and Will Arrangements, 1926, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 8</td>
<td>Notebook Pages, Sketch and Note on Etchings Sold, circa 1930s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 9</td>
<td>Notebook, Index to Oil Paintings, 1978</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 10</td>
<td>Oral History Interviews, 1978 transcripts and 3 sound cassettes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 11</td>
<td>Property, New London, Connecticut, Correspondence, 1943-1944</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 12</td>
<td>Property, New London, Connecticut, Land Deeds, 1923-1943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 13</td>
<td>Property, New York, New York, Deed, 1957</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 14</td>
<td>Property, Shinnecock Hills, New York, Appraisal Report, 1964</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 15</td>
<td>Property, Shinnecock Hills, New York, Correspondence, 1959-1978</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 16</td>
<td>Property, Shinnecock Hills, New York, Deeds, 1947-1965</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 17</td>
<td>Property, Shinnecock Hills, New York, General Information, circa 1960s</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 18</td>
<td>Works Project Administration Building Passes, 1939, undated</td>
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Series 2: Correspondence, 1930-1979

Correspondence is predominantly in the form of business and personal letters, postcards, and holiday cards received from family and friends. The Condolences and Family subseries include correspondence from Constant's daughter, Georgette Preston, and extended family members and friends. The General subseries include both personal and business related correspondence. Frequent personal correspondents include Milton and Sally Avery, Lewis Balamuth, Margaret Brunning, David Burliuk, Nathaniel Burwash, Rhys Caparn, Julia Shaw Patterson Carnell, Phillip Cavanaugh, Morris Davidson, Charles Eaton, Vilko Gecan, Marchal Landgren, Roy Neuberger, Walter Pach, Nell Perret, Constantine Pougialis, Wallace Putnam and Consuelo Kanaga, Hi Simons, and Helen Slosberg. Business related correspondents include Audubon Artists, Art Institute of Chicago, Brooklyn Museum, Carnegie Institute, Dayton Art Institute, Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors, Ferargil Galleries, Guild Hall, Heckscher Museum, Lyman Allyn Museum, Metropolitan Museum, Museum of Modern Art, Spanish Refugee Appeal, and the Whitney Museum. The Holiday Cards subseries includes numerous handmade, silkscreened, and printed holiday cards to Constant and his family, with frequent senders including Sally and Milton Avery, Phillip and March Cavanaugh, Morris and Anne Davidson, Dett and Carroll French, Nell and George Perret, and Wallace Putnam and Consuelo Kanaga. The WPA subseries includes business correspondence related to Constant's work with the Project.

The Correspondence series is arranged into 5 subseries:

- Subseries 2.1: Condolences, 1978
- Subseries 2.2: Family, 1956-1979
- Subseries 2.3: General, 1937-2000
- Subseries 2.4: Holiday Cards, 1954-1978
- Subseries 2.5: WPA, 1934-1968

2.1: Condolences, 1978

Box 1, Folder 19  Correspondence, A-E, 1978
Box 1, Folder 20  Correspondence, F-N, 1978
Box 1, Folder 21  Correspondence, O-Z, 1978
Box 1, Folder 22  Memorial Guest Book, 1978

2.2: Family, 1956-1979

Box 1, Folder 23  Konstant, Bette, Pam, Paul, and Joan, 1975-1979, 1970-1972
Box 1, Folder 24  Layne, Maria, and Melina, 1976
Box 1, Folder 25  McCarthy, Helen, Dick, and Nikki, 1971, 1976-1977
Box 1, Folder 26  Millio, Barbara, George, and Christopher, 1972-1973

2.3: General, 1937-2000
Box 1, Folder 28  Addison Gallery of American Art, 1961, 1955, 1953, 1944
Box 1, Folder 29  Allied Publications, Inc., 1963-1964, undated
Box 1, Folder 31  Archives of American Art, 1977-1978, 1969-1971
Box 1, Folder 32  Argonaut, 1969, 1971-1972, 1967
Box 1, Folder 33  Art Institute of Chicago, 1943-1947, 1957, 1961, 1970
Box 1, Folder 34  Art Students League of New York, 1948, 1957, 1967
Box 1, Folder 36  A, Miscellaneous, 1946-1977
Box 1, Folder 38  Bellevue Gallery, 1974, 1976-1978
Box 1, Folder 39  Bocour Artists Colors, 1964, 1971, 1969
Box 1, Folder 40  Breuning, Margaret, 1960-1961
Box 1, Folder 42  Burliuk, David, 1956-1957, 1959, 1949-1950
Box 1, Folder 43  Burwash, Nathaniel and Ida, 1966-1967, 191-1972
Box 1, Folder 44  Butler Institute of American Art, 1960, 1964, 1968
Box 1, Folder 45  B, Miscellaneous, 1955-1978
Box 1, Folder 47  Carnegie Institute, 1963-1964, 1944-1949, 1952
Box 1, Folder 48  Carnell, Julia Shaw Patterson, 1930-1939
Box 1, Folder 49  C, Miscellaneous, 1941-1965
Box 1, Folder 50  Dayton Art Institute, 1939-1944, 1960-1961, 1947
Box 1, Folder 51  Dolphin Enterprises (Howland, Jane), 1973, 1971, 1978, 1976
Box 1, Folder 52  D, Miscellaneous, 1949-1975
Box 1, Folder 53  Eaton, Charles and Isabel, 1970-1971
Box 1, Folder 54  E, Miscellaneous, 1939-1990
Box 1, Folder 56  Ferargil Galleries, 1943-1952
Box 1, Folder 57  Ford Foundation, 1958-1960
Box 1, Folder 58  F, Miscellaneous, 1966-1973
Box 1, Folder 59  Gecan, Vilko and Auka, 1957, 1947, 1937
Box 1, Folder 60  George Baer Gallery, 1949-1950
Box 1, Folder 61  Grace Borgenicht Gallery, 1965, 1960, 1951-1956
Box 1, Folder 64  G, Miscellaneous, 1944-1977
Box 1, Folder 66  H, Miscellaneous, 1946-1976
Box 1, Folder 67  Isaac Delgado Museum of Art, 1954, 1950, 1960
Box 1, Folder 68  I, Miscellaneous, 1948-1978
Box 1, Folder 69  Jewish Community Center, 1946
Box 1, Folder 70  June 1 Gallery of Fine Art, 1972
Box 1, Folder 71  J-K, Miscellaneous, 1942-1978
Box 1, Folder 72  Landgren, Marchal E., 1965, undated
Box 1, Folder 73  Long Island Arts Center, 1964
Box 1, Folder 74  Louis, Marion, 1976, 1973, 1970
Box 1, Folder 75  Lyman Allyn Museum, 1942
Box 1, Folder 76  L, Miscellaneous, 1951-1978
Box 1, Folder 77  McClellan, Grace and Grant, 1968, 1974-1975
Box 1, Folder 78  Melzer Gallery, 1954, 1956-1959
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<td>1, 80</td>
<td>Michigan State University, 1971, undated</td>
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<td>1, 82</td>
<td>M, Miscellaneous, 1946-1978</td>
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<td>1, 83</td>
<td>Neuberger, Roy R., 1950, undated</td>
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<td>1, 85</td>
<td>New York WPA Artists Inc., 1976-1978</td>
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<td>N-O, Miscellaneous, 1948-1977</td>
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<td>2, 2</td>
<td>Pach, Walter, 1947-1957, 1942-1945</td>
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<td>2, 5</td>
<td>Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1960-1961, undated</td>
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<td>2, 6</td>
<td>Pougialis, Constantine, 1966-1968</td>
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<td>2, 7</td>
<td>Protestant, 1948</td>
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<td>2, 9</td>
<td>P, Miscellaneous, 1943-1971</td>
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<td>2, 10</td>
<td>Renning, Rita and Philip, 1967, 1969-1971</td>
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<td>2, 11</td>
<td>R, Miscellaneous, 1932-1976</td>
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<td>2, 13</td>
<td>Sights, Sylvia Simons, 1968, undated</td>
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<td>2, 16</td>
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<td>2, 17</td>
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<td>2, 18</td>
<td>Spanish Refugee Appeal (Parker, Dorothy), 1947-1948</td>
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S-T, Miscellaneous, 1941-1978

Box 2, Folder 21  
Ulsher, Sallie, 1974-1975

Box 2, Folder 22  
University of Kentucky, 1977

Box 2, Folder 23  
U-V, Miscellaneous, 1947-1975

Box 2, Folder 24  

Box 2, Folder 25  
Walker Art Center, 1946, 1949, 1960, 1977

Box 2, Folder 26  

Box 2, Folder 27  
Wichita State University, 1974

Box 2, Folder 28  
W-Y, Miscellaneous, 1948-1978

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2.4: Holiday Cards, 1954-1978

Box 2, Folder 30  
Avery, Milton and Sally, circa 1950-1960s

Box 2, Folder 31  
B, Miscellaneous, circa 1950-1960s

Box 2, Folder 32  

Box 2, Folder 33  
Constant, George, circa 1960-1970s

Box 2, Folder 34  
C, Miscellaneous, 1963-1965, undated

Box 2, Folder 35  
Davidson, Morris and Anne, circa 1960s

Box 2, Folder 36  
D, Miscellaneous, circa 1950-1960s

Box 2, Folder 37  

Box 2, Folder 38  
E, Miscellaneous, circa 1950-1960s

Box 2, Folder 39  

Box 2, Folder 40  
F-G, Miscellaneous, circa 1950-1970s

Box 2, Folder 41  
Greek, Miscellaneous, circa 1950-1970s

Box 2, Folder 42  
H-J, Miscellaneous, circa 1950-1970s

Box 2, Folder 43  
K-M, Miscellaneous, circa 1950-1960s

Box 2, Folder 44  
N-O, Miscellaneous, circa 1950-1960s
Box 2, Folder 45       Perret, Nell and George, 1964-1967
Box 2, Folder 46       Preston, Georgette and David, circa 1960-1970s
Box 2, Folder 47       Putnam, Wallace and Kanaga, Consuelo, circa 1950-1970s
Box 2, Folder 48       P-R, Miscellaneous, circa 1950s-1960s
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Series 3: Printed Material, 1927-2005

Printed material includes seven books and nine booklets on American and Greek art, including a limited print edition of *George Constant* by George Constant, clippings and articles reviewing Constant’s work, exhibition announcements, over 150 catalogs of Constant’s shows, a videocassette from the 1998 single man show, *Exploration of the Universe*, three periodical articles profiling his work, and dance and theater related programs that Constant consulted on, a majority of which were choreographed by Alwin Nikolais.

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Box 2, Folder 60  Book, *George Constant* by George Constant, 1961
Box 2, Folder 62  Book, *Queer Thing, Painting* by Walter Pach, 1938
Box 2, Folder 63  Book, *Twentieth Century Highlights of American Painting* by United States Information Agency, 1958
Box 3, Folder 1  Books, Greek, Miscellaneous, 1967-1968, 1948
Box 3, Folder 2  Booklets, 1947, 1927, 1950
Box 3, Folder 4-9  Clippings, 1927-2004
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Box 3, Folder 10-13  Exhibition Announcements, circa 1920s-2000s
   4 Folders
Box 3, Folder 14-16  Exhibition Catalogs, 1927, 1939, 1930, 1935
   3 Folders
Box 3, Folder 17-21  Exhibition Catalogs, 1940-1944
   5 Folders
Box 3, Folder 22-26  Exhibition Catalogs, 1945-1949
   5 Folders
Box 3, Folder 27  Exhibition Catalogs, 1950-1951
Box 4, Folder 1-5  Exhibition Catalogs, 1952-1958, 1960-1962
   5 Folders
Box 4, Folder 6-10  Exhibition Catalogs, 1963-1968
   5 Folders
Box 4, Folder 11-15  Exhibition Catalogs, 1969-1976, undated
   5 Folders
catalogs and 1 videocassette

Box 4, Folder 17  Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1940-1950s
Box 4, Folder 19  Programs and Announcements, Dance and Theater Related, 1955-1965

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Series 4: Photographic Material, 1912-1978

Photographs include black and white prints of Constant and his family and friends in St. Louis, Missouri, Dayton, Ohio, and in and around his studio in Shinnecock Hills, New York. The collection also includes three photo stills from his 1965 exhibition at the Parrish Art Museum and a comprehensive set of black and white prints, a handful of color prints, and several color slide sheets of Constant's dry point etchings, oil paintings, watercolors, and other artwork dating from the 1920s to 1978.

Box 4, Folder 20  Photographs of George Constant with Family and Friends, 1912-1969
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Box 4, Folder 24  Photographs of Drypoint Etchings, Landscapes and Still Lifes, circa 1930-1940s
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Box 4, Folder 26  Photographs of Lithographs, 1935, undated
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Box 5, Folder 5  Photographs of Oil Paintings, Abstract Lines, Colors, and Blocks, 1950-1974
Box 5, Folder 6  Photographs of Oil Paintings, Block Figures, Couples, 1948-1970
Box 5, Folder 7  Photographs of Oil Paintings, Block Figures, Groups, 1948-1963
Box 5, Folder 8  Photographs of Oil Paintings, Block Figures, in Space, 1958-1968
Box 5, Folder 9  Photographs of Oil Paintings, Block Figures, Vertical, 1947-1958
Box 5, Folder 10 Photographs of Oil Paintings, Children, 1937-1942
Box 5, Folder 11 Photographs of Oil Paintings, Portraits, Trios, circa 1920s
Box 5, Folder 12 Photographs of Oil Paintings, Women, 1923-1946
Box 6, Folder 1  Photographs of Pen and Ink Drawings, 1955-1956
Box 6, Folder 2  Photographs of Sculpture and Fabric Art, circa 1910-1920s
Box 6, Folder 3  Photographs of Watercolors, Abstracts and Block Forms, circa 1940-1960s
Box 6, Folder 4  Photographs of Watercolors, Animals and Flowers, circa 1930-1940s
Box 6, Folder 5  Photographs of Watercolors, Female Nudes, circa 1920-1960s
Box 6, Folder 6  Photographs of Watercolors, Female Nudes Seated, circa 1930-1950s
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