



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Avel de Knight
papers, 1947-2003, bulk 1957-1968,
in the Archives of American Art

Rayna Andrews

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

2018/04/06

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/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Arrangement.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Names and Subjects	3
Container Listing	4
Series 1: Professional Files, 1966-1997.....	4
Series 2: Writings, 1957-1968, undated.....	5
Series 3: Printed Material, 1947, 1962-2003, undated.....	6
Series 4: Photographic Material, circa 1959-1989.....	7

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Avel de Knight papers
Identifier:	AAA.deknavel
Date:	1947-2003 (bulk 1957-1968)
Extent:	0.6 Linear feet
Creator:	De Knight, Avel, 1921-1995
Language:	The collection is in English and French.
Summary:	The Avel de Knight papers measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1947 to 2003 with the bulk of the collection dating from 1957 to 1968. The collection includes professional files, writings, printed material, and photographic material.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Avel de Knight loaned materials for microfilming in 1969. Additional papers were donated to the Archives of American Art in 2003 by Stephen J. and Sunchita F. Tyson, executors of Avel de Knight's estate.

Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds microfilm of material lent for microfilming on reels D388 and N69-111. This includes art criticism and Department of State correspondence, letters and certificates of award from the American Watercolor Society, notices of purchase and awards from the National Academy of Design, material from the National Institute of Arts and letters concerning grants, and photographs of de Knight with his work. Loaned materials were returned to the lender and are not described in the collection container inventory.

Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Avel de Knight conducted by Henri Ghent, 1968.

Available Formats

Materials lent for microfilming are available on 35mm microfilm reels D388 and N69-111 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

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

Avel de Knight papers, 1947-2003, bulk 1957-1968. 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

Avel C. de Knight (1921-1995) was an African American painter, educator, and art critic. His birth dates are also cited as 1923, 1925, 1931, and 1933. Born in New York to parents from Barbados and Puerto Rico, he attended Pratt Institute before serving in a segregated United States Army unit in World War II. After the war, he studied at the École de Beaux-Arts, the Grand Chaumière, and the Académie Julian in Paris under the G.I. Bill. He returned to the United States in 1956 and in 1957 began reviewing New York exhibitions for *France-Amérique*. He also taught at the Art Students League and later at the National Academy School of Fine Arts. De Knight was an Academician of the National Academy of Design and his works are held in collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Walker Art Center, and the University of Richmond Museums.

Scope and Contents

The Avel de Knight papers measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1947 to 2003 with the bulk of the collection dating from 1957 to 1968. The collection includes professional files, writings, printed material, and photographic material.

Professional files include biographies and chronologies, professional correspondence, and material related to de Knight's menu designs for l'Escargot Restaurant, a French restaurant in Chicago.

Writings make up the bulk of the collection and consist primarily of clippings of de Knight's critiques in *France-Amérique*. Filed within these critiques are occasional letters from artists whose shows de Knight reviewed in the paper. Also included in this series are artist statements and notes.

Printed material includes exhibition announcements, catalogs, and invitations; clippings and reviews; press releases and newsletters; and reproductions of de Knight's works of art.

Photographic material includes photographs and contact sheets of Avel de Knight and his work.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in four series.

- Series 1: Professional Files, 1966-1997 (Box 1; 3 Folders)
- Series 2: Writings, 1957-1968, undated (Box 1; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 3: Printed Material, 1947, 1962-2003, undated (Box 2; 4 Folders)
- Series 4: Photographic Material, circa 1959-1989 (Box 2; 3 Folders)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

African American artists
Latino and Latin American artists

Types of Materials:

Menus
Photographs

Occupations:

Art critics -- New York (State) -- New York
Educators
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Professional Files, 1966-1997

3 Folders (Box 1)

Professional files include biographies and chronologies produced for galleries and museums, professional correspondence, and material related to de Knight's menu designs for l'Escargot Restaurant, a French restaurant in Chicago.

Box 1, Folder 1	Chronology and Biography, 1966, 1997, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Correspondence, 1973-1981, 1988
Box 1, Folder 3	Material Related to Menu Designs for L'Escargot Restaurant, 1980-1982

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Writings, 1957-1968, undated

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Writings make up the bulk of the collection and consist primarily of clippings of de Knight's critiques in *France-Amérique*. These reviews are entirely in French. Correspondence from artists whose exhibitions de Knight reviewed are intermingled within the clippings. Also included in this series are artist statements and notes.

Box 1, Folder 4-13 Critiques By Avel de Knight Written for *France-Amérique*, 1957-1968

Box 1, Folder 14 Artist Statements and Notes, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Printed Material, 1947, 1962-2003, undated

4 Folders (Box 2)

Printed material includes exhibition announcements, catalogs, and invitations; clippings and reviews; press releases and newsletters; and reproductions of de Knight's works of art.

Box 2, Folder 1	Exhibition Announcements, Catalogs, Invitations, Etc., 1968-2003
Box 2, Folder 2	Clippings and Reviews, 1947, 1962-2001, undated
Box 2, Folder 3	Press Releases and Newsletters, 1971-2001, undated
Box 2, Folder 4	Reproductions of Avel de Knight Works of Art, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Photographic Material, circa 1959-1989

3 Folders (Box 2)

Photographic material includes photographs and contact sheets of Avel de Knight and his work.

Box 2, Folder 5	Photographs of Avel de Knight, 1959, circa 1980, 1989, undated
Box 2, Folder 6	Photographs of Works of Art, 1970-1977
Box 2, Folder 7	Contact Sheets of Images of Exhibitions and Works of Art, 1968, 1973, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)