



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Burgoyne Diller Papers, 1924-1987, in the Archives of American Art

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October 2002

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Burgoyne Diller papers
Date:	1924-1987
Identifier:	AAA.dillburg
Creator:	Diller, Burgoyne, 1906-1965
Extent:	1.5 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Burgoyne Diller papers measure 1.5 linear feet and date from 1924-1987. The collection documents the abstract painter's career and includes two letters, a notebook, four annotated sketchbooks, art work, and clippings. The collection primarily consists of art work, including hundreds of drawings that document the development of Burgoyne Diller's unique artistic style. An unprocessed addition measuring 0.4 linear feet consists of sketches and studies by Diller.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Burgoyne Diller papers were donated by the Grace Diller estate via William C. LaCrone, executor, in 1992. Some of the papers were donated by the Diller estate via art historian Kenneth W. Prescott, in 4 installments dating 1983-2000. An unprocessed addition of 0.4 linear feet received in 2010 was donated by Emma-Stina Prescott.

Related Material

Burgoyne Diller collection of printed material, 1932-1961.

Processing Information

The collection was processed by Jean Fitzgerald in October 2002. An addition of 0.4 linear feet donated in 2010 remains unprocessed.

Preferred Citation

Burgoyne Diller papers, 1924-1987. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

The collection is open for research. Use requires an appointment and is limited to the Washington, D.C. research facility.

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Biographical Note

Born in New York City in 1906, Burgoyne Diller was brought up in Michigan and attended Michigan State College. He returned to New York in 1926 and studied at the Art Students League from 1928 to 1932, with Hans Hofmann. Diller made his first geometrical paintings in the 1930s, which were influenced by the rigid formulas of Piet Mondrian's "pure plastic art." Diller's work evolved into an abstract mode of configurations of lines, angles, and primary colors. Diller was one of the original members of the American Abstract Artists.

Between 1935 and 1941, Diller worked for the New York City Federal Arts Program, Mural Division, Works Progress Administration, eventually becoming Director. During that time, he provided commissions for many of the most advanced artists of the day, including Arshile Gorky and Stuart Davis. In 1945, he became associate professor of art at Brooklyn College. Burgoyne Diller died in 1965.

Scope and Content Note

The Burgoyne Diller papers measure 1.5 linear feet and date from 1924-1987. The collection documents the abstract painter's career and includes two letters, a notebook, four annotated sketchbooks, art work, and clippings. The collection primarily consists of art work, including hundreds of drawings that document the development of Burgoyne Diller's unique artistic style. An additional 0.4 linear feet of sketches and studies by Diller were accessioned in 2010 and remains unprocessed.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as five series. Series 1 and 4 are arranged chronologically. Series 2 consists of a single dismantled notebook which maintains the creator's original arrangement. Series 3 has been arranged in a numerically consecutive order introduced by the donor, Kenneth W. Prescott. There are gaps in art work's numerical sequences.

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Letters, 1940 (Box 1; 1 folder)
 - Series 2: Notebook, 1932-1933 (Box 1; 6 folders)
 - Series 3: Art work, 1924-1964, undated (Box 1-3; OVS 4-9; 33 folders)
 - Series 4: Clippings, 1926-1968, undated (Box 2; 10 folders)
 - Series 5: Unprocessed Addition to the Burgoyne Diller Papers, 1930-1987 (Box 10, OV 11; 0.4 linear ft.)
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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, Modern -- 20th century -- United States
Neoplasticism
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
Painting, Abstract
Works of art

Types of Materials:

Drawings
Sketches

Container Listing

Series 1: Letters, 1940

(Box 1; 1 folder)

Box 1, Folder 1

Christmas card, letter from José Gutierrez, 1940

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Series 2: Notebook, 1932-1933

(Box 1; 6 folders)

Scope and Contents: This dismantled notebook includes Hans Hofmann's notes about lectures and theories and is illustrated with diagrams and drawings. Also found are miscellaneous booklets.

Box 1, Folder 2	Notebook cover, 1932-1933
Box 1, Folder 3	Pages of notes displaying 9 diagrams, 1932-1933
Box 1, Folder 4	Pages of notes, including Hofmann's theories, displaying 13 diagrams and 4 drawings, 1932
Box 1, Folder 5	Drawing and 5 booklets concerning artists' materials, 1932-1933
Box 1, Folder 6	Pages of notes displaying 4 diagrams and a drawing, 1932-1933
Box 1, Folder 7	Pages of notes displaying 5 drawings, 1932-1933

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Series 3: Art Work, 1924-1964, undated

(Box 1-3, OV 4-9; 33 folders)

Scope and Contents: This series consists of 4 sketchbooks, and hundreds of drawings, collages, and a lithograph that document the development of his unique artistic style. The media of the art work includes pencil, charcoal, conte crayon, pastel, ink, and cardboard strips.

Box 1, Folder 8	Annotated sketchbooks, 1 and 2, 1924-1926, undated
Box 1, Folder 9	Annotated sketchbooks, 3 and 4, 1933
Box 1, Folder 10	Drawings, unnumbered, 1964, undated (see also Box 3, Folder 1 and OV 5)
Box 1, Folder 11-18	Drawings and a collage (numbered 1-91 RES through 158-91 RES), 1930-1963 (see also Box 3, Folders 2-3 and OV 6)
Box 2, Folder 1-2	Drawings and a collage (numbered 159-91 RES through 179-91 RES), 1930-1963 (see also OV 6)
Box 2, Folder 3-4	Drawings, a collage, and a lithograph (numbered d1 through d51), 1949, undated (see also Box 3, Folders 4-6 and OV 6)
Box 2, Folder 5-6	Drawings (numbered 43 through 199), undated (see also OV 7, OV 8, OV 9)
Box 2, Folder 7	Drawings (numbered 201 through 260), undated (see also Box 3, Folder 7)
Box 2, Folder 8	Drawings (numbered 424 through 488), undated (see also Box 3, Folder 8 and OV 9)
Box 3, Folder 1-8	Oversized drawings and collages, unnumbered and numbered, 1930-1963
Box OV 4	Oversized drawings and collage, unnumbered, undated
Box OV 5	Oversized drawings, unnumbered, undated
Box OV 6	Oversized drawings, a collage, and a lithograph, numbered, 1930-1963, undated
Box OV 7	Oversized drawings, numbered, undated
Box OV 8	Oversized drawings, numbered, undated

Box OV 9

Oversized drawings, numbered, undated

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Series 4: Clippings, 1926-1968, undated

(Box 2; 10 folders)

Scope and Contents: This series consists of clippings that document Diller's career.

Box 2, Folder 9-18 Clippings, 1926-1968, undated

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Series 5: Unprocessed Addition to the Burgoyne Diller Papers, 1930-1987

0.4 Linear feet (Box 10, OV 11)

Scope and Contents: An additional 0.4 linear feet of sketches and studies by Diller were accessioned in 2010 and remains unprocessed.

Box 10 Unprocessed Addition, 1930-1987

Oversize 11 Oversize Unprocessed Addition, 1930-1987

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