



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Humberto Dionisio Papers,  
1919-1990, in the Archives of American Art

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Archives of American Art  
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Humberto Dionisio papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.dionhumb
<b>Date:</b>	1919-1990
<b>Extent:</b>	2.6 linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Dionisio, Humberto, 1950-1987
<b>Language:</b>	Multiple languages  The records are in English and Spanish.  English; Spanish
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of painter Humberto Dionisio measure 2.6 linear feet and date from 1919 to 1990. The collection primarily documents Dionisio's relationships with his family, particularly his mother, through letters, photographs, financial records, printed material, and family memorabilia collected by Dionisio himself and by his mother, Zaida Ortega Dominguez.

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The Humberto Dionisio papers were donated by Jim Kitchens, a friend of Dionisio, in 1996.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed by Rosa M. Fernández in 1997.

### Preferred Citation

Humberto Dionisio papers, 1919-1990. 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.

### Ownership and Literary Rights

The Humberto Dionisio 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.

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## Biographical Note

Humberto Dionisio was born in Cuba in 1950. During the 1970s he became a noted poster artist and completed his studies in Graphic Design at the Consejo Nacional de Cultura in Cuba in 1975. He arrived in Miami, Florida, via the Mariel boat lift in 1980, and achieved success in Miami as a painter from the mid to late 1980s. He died in March 1987 at the age of thirty-six.

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## Scope and Content Note

The collection measures 2.6 linear feet, dates from 1919 to 1990, and includes letters, photographs, financial records, printed material, and family memorabilia. The papers of Dionisio primarily document his relationships with other family members and friends through photographs and letters received from his mother, Zaida Ortega Dominguez, and others. The collection also contains papers, photographs and original sketches (by Dominguez) collected by Dominguez herself which were in Dionisio's care. Papers relating specifically to Dionisio's work as an artist are represented to a lesser degree in this collection and consist primarily of printed material and photographs of Dionisio at work and at an exhibition of his work. There is also one original watercolor by Dionisio from 1985.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into two series. Each series is arranged into subseries according to record type.

- Series 1: Humberto Dionisio Papers, 1926-1990, undated (Boxes 1-3; 1.7 linear feet)
- Series 2: Zaida Ortega Dominguez Papers, 1919-circa 1980s, undated (Boxes 4-6; 0.9 linear feet)

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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:

Artists -- Cuba  
Cuban American art  
Cuban American artists  
Cuban Americans -- Florida -- Miami  
Expatriate artists -- Florida -- Miami  
Hispanic American artists

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Dominquez, Zaida Ortega  
Rodriguez, Zoraida

Saavedra, Nelia Dominguez

Geographic Names:

Cuba -- Social life and customs

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Humberto Dionisio Papers, 1926-1990, undated

#### *1.7 linear feet (Boxes 1-3)*

The bulk of this series consists of letters and photographs. Letters are primarily from Dionisio's mother, Zaida Ortega Dominguez, and are generally in Spanish.

The series is arranged into eight subseries.

- 1.1: Biographical Material, 1974-1987, undated
- 1.2: Letters, 1980-1987, undated
- 1.3: Business Papers, 1980-1986
- 1.4: Notes, undated
- 1.5: Writings, 1978-1980, undated
- 1.6: Clippings, 1975-1990, undated
- 1.7: Photographs, 1950-1984, undated
- 1.8: Michael Ford File, 1926, 1951, 1987-1990, undated

#### 1.1: Biographical Material, 1974-1987, undated

The biographical material found in this subseries consists primarily of the contents of two wallets, including photographs of Dionisio and family members and identification cards. The subseries also contains diplomas and awards, a resumé, and financial and medical records.

Box 1, Folder 1	Brown Wallet, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Contents of Brown Wallet, 1983-1987, undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Contents of Red Wallet, undated
Box 1, Folder 4	Diplomas and Awards, 1974-1979 See also OV 7.
Box 1, Folder 5	Resumé, circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 6	Birth Certificate, Exit Papers, 1982
Box 1, Folder 7	St. Kevins Catholic School, Dade County Public School, 1980-1982
Box 1, Folder 8	Health Benefits Information, 1986
Box 1, Folder 9	Income Tax Papers, 1982
Box 1, Folder 10	Invoice from Bloomingdale's, 1985-1986
Box 1, Folder 11	Unemployment Benefits, 1982
Box 1, Folder 12	Miscellany, 1980s

## 1.2: Letters, 1980-1987, undated

In addition to letters from Dionisio's mother, this subseries also contains letters from his grandmother, Nelia Dominguez Saavedra, and his cousin, dancer Zoraida Rodriguez, which were written between Dionisio's departure from Cuba in 1980 and his death in 1987. The letters frequently mention social and political events in Cuba and the envelopes are often decorated with colorful pictures of Cuban writers and political heroes, as well as fauna and flora of the island. Several letters include clippings from Cuban newspapers regarding art exhibitions and films. Letters from Zoraida Rodriguez include clippings and programs of the "Ballet de Camaguey" in which she was one of the principal dancers. Also found here are letters from Zaida Ortega Dominguez addressed to other family members living in Miami. Three letters from Dominguez to Dionisio, dated 1987, were received unopened.

Box 1, Folder 13-27	Letters, 1980-1987
Box 1, Folder 28	Letters from Lovers, undated
Box 1, Folder 29	Letters from Friends and Other Family, undated
Box 1, Folder 30	Letters from Dionisio to Grandmother, undated
Box 1, Folder 31	Greeting Cards to Dionisio, 1981-1986, undated

## 1.3: Business Papers, 1980-1986

This subseries contains routine business and legal records.

Box 1, Folder 32	Gene Barry Volkswagen, 1980
Box 1, Folder 33	Crawford and Company (Attorneys), 1981
Box 1, Folder 34	Car Accident Papers, 1981
Box 1, Folder 35	State of Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, 1981
Box 1, Folder 36	Utah Home Fire Insurance Company, 1981
Box 1, Folder 37	Miscellany, 1980-1986

## 1.4: Notes, circa 1990, undated

This subseries contains guest and price lists for several exhibitions of Dionisio's work, including a 1990 retrospective exhibition at the InterAmerican Art Gallery. Handwritten notes, and lists of names and addresses can also be found here.

Box 1, Folder 38	Guest Lists for <i>Axes</i> and <i>Retrospective</i> , undated
Box 1, Folder 39	Handwritten Notes, 1985, undated
Box 1, Folder 40	List of Names and Addresses, undated
Box 1, Folder 41	Price Lists and Lists of Works in Humberto Dionisio Retrospective, circa 1990

### 1.5: Writings, 1978-1980, undated

This series contains several poems in addition to an essay by Giulio V. Blanc about Dionisio.

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|------------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 42 | Writings by Giulio V. Blanc About Humberto Dionisio and the <i>Expresiones Hispanas</i> Exhibition, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 43 | Poems by Dionisio, for Dionisio, and for Damian by Carlos Manuel Ortego, 1978-1980                          |

### 1.6: Printed Material, 1975-1990, undated

Found here are clippings about Dionisio and other artists, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and handwritten and printed versions of a eulogy written for Dionisio by Carlos Alfonzo.

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|------------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 44 | Clippings, 1976, 1982, 1990                                       |
| Box 1, Folder 45 | Clippings About Other Artists, 1987-1988                          |
| Box 1, Folder 46 | Exhibition Announcements and Invitations, 1986                    |
| Box 1, Folder 47 | Exhibition Announcements for Dionisio Exhibitions, 1987, 1990     |
| Box 1, Folder 48 | Exhibition Catalog, 1975  |
| Box 1, Folder 49 | Exhibition Announcements for Group Shows with Dionisio, 1986-1987 |
| Box 1, Folder 50 | Carlos Alfonzo's Eulogy for Dionisio, 1987                        |
| Box 1, Folder 51 | Periodical <i>El Mariel</i> , undated                             |
| Box 1, Folder 52 | Miscellaneous Printed Material, undated                           |

### 1.7: Photographs, 1950-1984, undated

In addition to loose photographs of Dionisio with family and friends, this subseries contains two photograph albums of snapshots of Dionisio with family and friends, in addition to photographs of Dionisio at work, and at an exhibition of his work.

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|-------------------|---|
| Box 2, Folder 1   | Loose Pages from Albums, 1980-1981, undated                   |
| Box 2, Folder 2-3 | Two Photograph Albums, 1980-1981, undated                     |
| Box 3, Folder 1   | Photographs of Dionisio and Friends, 1981, 1984, undated      |
| Box 3, Folder 2   | Photographs of Dionisio's Work, 1977, undated                 |
| Box 3, Folder 3   | Photographs of Dionisio's <i>Calle Ocho</i> , undated         |
| Box 3, Folder 4   | Miscellaneous Photographs, undated                            |
| Box 3, Folder 5   | Photographs of Dionisio and Immediate Family, circa 1950-1955 |



Box 3, Folder 6            Photographs of Dionisio Alone and with Friends and Family, undated

Box 3, Folder 7            Photographs of Dionisio, undated

Box 3, Folder 8            Photographs of Dionisio as a Child, circa 1950-1954

### 1.8: Michael Ford File, 1926, 1951, 1985-1990, undated

This subseries consists of a small amount of material kept by Michael Ford, a friend of Dionisio, including correspondence, photocopies of artwork, an original watercolor by Dionisio, and printed material.

Box 3, Folder 9            Correspondence, 1987, 1990

Box 3, Folder 10          Color Photocopies of Artwork, undated

Box 3, Folder 11-13        Printed Material, 1926, 1951

Box OV 7                    Original Print by Unknown Artist, undated

Box OV 7                    Original Watercolor by Dionisio, 1985

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## Series 2: Zaida Ortega Dominguez Papers, 1919-circa 1980s, undated

*0.9 linear feet (Boxes 4-6)*

Papers of Dionisio's mother primarily consist of photographs of family and friends in addition to family memorabilia, artwork by Dominguez, letters, and printed material. Certain items relate to Dionisio's brother, Ricardo Padron Ortega, and his father, Humberto Ysidro Padron Fernández.

- 2.1: Biographical Material, 1919-1980, undated
- 2.2: Letters and Printed Material, 1979-circa 1981, undated
- 2.3: Photographs, circa 1920-1980s, undated
- 2.4: Artwork, circa 1930s, 1972, undated

### 2.1: Biographical Material, 1919-1980, undated

Found here are family records such as birth and marriage certificates and baby memorabilia.

Box 4, Folder 1	Ricardo Padron Ortega Funeral Document and Doctor's Certificate, 1979
Box 4, Folder 2	First Communion Certificate of Ricardo Padron Ortega, 1961
Box 4, Folder 3	Ricardo Padron Ortega's Baby Book, undated
Box 4, Folder 4	Lock of Hair with Handwritten Note, undated
Box 4, Folder 5	Zaida Ortega Dominguez Birth Certificate, 1919 (stamped 1980)
Box 4, Folder 6	Zaida Ortega Dominguez Marriage Certificate, 1949 (stamped 1979)
Box 4, Folder 7	Humberto Ysidro Padron Fernández Birth Certificate, 1922 (signed 1968)

### 2.2: Letters and Printed Material, 1979-circa 1981, undated

Found here are poems, greeting and sympathy cards, notes, and a clipping.

Box 4, Folder 8	Poem from Ricardo Padron Ortega to Dominguez, undated
Box 4, Folder 9	Sympathy Card from Friends to Dominguez upon the Death of Ricardo Padron Ortega, 1979
Box 4, Folder 10	Greeting Cards to Dominguez, circa 1981
Box 4, Folder 11	Handwritten Notes from Ricardo Padron Ortega to Dominguez, undated
Box 4, Folder 12	Clipping Concerning Bridal Shower of Friend, undated

### 2.3: Photographs, circa 1920-1980s, undated

This subseries forms the bulk of the series and contains photographs of family and friends including Dionisio as an infant and throughout his life.

Box 4, Folder 13	Portraits of Family and Friends, circa 1930s-1980s
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- Box 4, Folder 14-15      Photographs of Family and Friends, Group Shots, circa 1930-1980s
- Box 4, Folder 16      Photographs of Family and Friends, circa 1930s-1980s
- Box 4, Folder 17      Photographs of Children, Family and Friends, circa 1930-1980s
- Box 4, Folder 18      Dominguez's Grade School Graduation Photographs, circa 1926-1936
- Box 4, Folder 19      Photographs of Dominguez, circa 1920-1980s
- Box 4, Folder 20      Polaroids of Family and Friends, undated
- Box 5, Folder 1      Photographs of Dominguez and Humberto Ysidro Padron Fernández (Husband), circa 1940-1950s
- Box 5, Folder 2      Photographs of Dionisio's Brothers as Children, circa 1952-1955
- Box 5, Folder 3      Photographs of Dominguez with Second Husband, undated
- Box 5, Folder 4      Miscellaneous Photographs, undated
- Box 6, Folder 1      Framed Photograph of Unidentified Man, undated
- Box 6, Folder 2      Photographs of Baptism, Wedding, Bridal Shower and Dinner Banquet, 1945, 1953, undated
- Box 6, Folder 3      Photographs of Dominguez and Unidentified Woman, undated

#### 2.4: Artwork, circa 1930s, 1972, undated

This subseries consists of a group of original sketches and drawings by Dominguez, primarily of Hollywood personalities.

- Box 6, Folder 4-5      Original Drawings, circa 1930s, 1972, undated

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