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Archives of American Art

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

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2002

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Humberto Dionisio papers
Date:	1919-1990
Identifier:	AAA.dionhumb
Creator:	Dionisio, Humberto, 1950-1987
Extent:	2.7 Linear feet
Language:	The records are in English and Spanish.
Summary:	The papers of Cuban born American painter Humberto Dionisio measure 2.7 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.

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.

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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.

Scope and Content Note

The collection measures 2.7 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.

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)

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
Latino and Latin American artists

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Dominquez, Zaida Ortega
Rodriguez, Zoraida
Saavedra, Nelia Dominguez

Places:

Cuba -- Social life and customs

Container Listing

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

1.7 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3)

Scope and Contents: 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.

Arrangement: 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

Subseries 1.1: Biographical Material, 1974-1987, undated

Scope and Contents: 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 Notes: 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

Subseries 1.2: Letters, 1980-1987, undated

Scope and Contents: 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

Subseries 1.3: Business Papers, 1980-1986

Scope and Contents: 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

Subseries 1.4: Notes, circa 1990, undated

Scope and Contents: 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 Axes and Retrospective, 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

Subseries 1.5: Writings, 1978-1980, undated

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

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

Subseries 1.6: Printed Material, 1975-1990, undated

Scope and Contents: 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.

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 El Mariel, undated
Box 1, Folder 52	Miscellaneous Printed Material, undated

Subseries 1.7: Photographs, 1950-1984, undated

Scope and Contents: 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.

Box 2, Folder 1	Loose Photographs from Albums, 1980-1981, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	Two Photograph Albums, 1980-1981, undated
Box 2, Folder 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 Calle Ocho, 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

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

Scope and Contents: 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
Oversize OV 7	Original Print by Unknown Artist, undated
Oversize 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)

Scope and Contents: Papers of Dioniso'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.

- Arrangement:
- 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

Subseries 2.1: Biographical Material, 1919-1980, undated

Scope and Contents: 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
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Box 4, Folder 2	First Communion Certificate of Ricardo Padron Ortega, 1961
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Box 4, Folder 3	Ricardo Padron Ortega's Baby Book, undated
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Box 4, Folder 4	Lock of Hair with Handwritten Note, undated
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Box 4, Folder 5	Zaida Ortega Dominguez Birth Certificate, 1919 (stamped 1980)
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Box 4, Folder 6	Zaida Ortega Dominguez Marriage Certificate, 1949 (stamped 1979)
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Box 4, Folder 7	Humberto Ysidro Padron Fernández Birth Certificate, 1922 (signed 1968)
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Subseries 2.2: Letters and Printed Material, 1979-circa 1981, undated

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

Box 4, Folder 8	Poem from Ricardo Padron Ortega to Dominguez, undated
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Box 4, Folder 9	Sympathy Card from Friends to Dominguez upon the Death of Ricardo Padron Ortega, 1979
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Box 4, Folder 10	Greeting Cards to Dominguez, circa 1981
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Box 4, Folder 11	Handwritten Notes from Ricardo Padron Ortega to Dominguez, undated
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Box 4, Folder 12	Clipping Concerning Bridal Shower of Friend, undated
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Subseries 2.3: Photographs, circa 1920-1980s, undated

Scope and Contents: 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
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

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

Scope and Contents: 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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