



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Mark di Suvero and di Suvero Family Papers, 1934-2005, in the Archives of American Art

Jean Fitzgerald

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Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Mark di Suvero and di Suvero family papers
Identifier:	AAA.disumark
Date:	1934-2005
Creator:	Di Suvero, Mark, 1933-
Extent:	6.8 Linear feet 0.263 Gigabytes
Language:	English .
Summary:	The collection measures 6.8 linear feet and 0.263 GB, dates from 1934 to 2005, and documents the career of sculptor Mark di Suvero and family relationships. Found within the papers are biographical material; letters to and from di Suvero family members; scattered writings by di Suvero and Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero, the artist's sister, about Mark di Suvero; drawings; a file on the Socrates Sculpture Park; a file on artist Helen Lessick, an acquaintance of Mark di Suvero; exhibition files; printed material; photographs of the artist, artwork, and members of the di Suvero family; audio and video recordings of interviews with di Suvero; and promotional Tee Shirts. A portion of this collection is sealed.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Mark di Suvero and di Suvero family papers were donated in 2004 and 2005 by Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero, the artist's sister. After donation, the donor requested that a portion of the papers be sealed (no access) until 2033. The sealed portion includes family letters, a typescript for a book, a play script, and family photographs.

Processing Information

The papers were processed by Jean Fitzgerald in October 2005. After processing, the donor requested that a portion of the collection be sealed, thus the sealed boxes have box numbers integrated with the rest of the boxes. Born-digital materials were processed by Kirsi Ritosalmi-Kisner in 2019 with funding from Smithsonian Collection Care and Preservation Fund.

Preferred Citation

Mark di Suvero and di Suvero family papers, 1934-2005. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

A portion of the the collection is open for research, Boxes 1-5, 7, and OV 9. Use requires an appointment. **A portion of the collection (Boxes 6, 8, OV 10) is SEALED and unavailable for research.**

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Biographical Note

Mark di Suvero was born September 18, 1933, in Shanghai, China, the son of Matilde Millo di Suvero and Victor E. di Suvero, an Italian diplomat. He was one of four children: Victor M., the eldest, Marie Louise, Mark, and the youngest son Henry. With the outbreak of World War II, the family immigrated to San Francisco, California, in 1941.

Mark di Suvero studied fine arts and philosophy at the San Francisco City College from 1953 to 1954, and attended the University of California, Santa Barbara, from 1954-1955, where he began creating sculpture. In 1956, he received a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of California, Berkeley. The following year, di Suvero moved to New York City to establish a career as a sculptor.

Shortly before his first solo exhibition at the Green Gallery in 1960, di Suvero suffered severe spinal injuries when he was pinned against an elevator shaft in a construction accident. Initially confined to a wheelchair for two years, di Suvero persevered in overcoming his injuries and continuing his work.

In protest of the Vietnam War, di Suvero left the United States in 1971, and exhibited his sculpture in Holland and Germany. A year later, he established a painting and drawing studio in Venice, where he also taught at the Università Internazionale dell'Arte, and, in 1973, he moved to France. Also during this time, di Suvero married Maria Teresa Capparotta, an architect, whom he later divorced.

The Whitney Museum of American Art honored Mark di Suvero in 1975 with the first retrospective and first American city-wide exhibition of his work, in New York City. At this time, di Suvero began working with a team in assembling his sculpture, first with Lowell McKegey, and later joined by his nephews Enrico and Matteo Martignoni.

In 1977, di Suvero founded the Athena Foundation to award grants to artists. In 1986, in conjunction with the Athena Foundation and with Enrico Martignoni, he created the Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City, New York, an outdoor space where sculptors are invited to create and exhibit their work. With Marcel Evrard in 1988, di Suvero created a foundation entitled La Vie des Formes (The Life of Forms) in the shipyards at Chalon-sur-Saône, France. Based upon the model of Socrates Sculpture Park, this organization hosted artists in studio and exhibition spaces at the shipyard and on di Suvero's converted canal barge *Rêve des Signes*, that was moored alongside.

Included in most major international gallery collections, Mark di Suvero's art work has also been the focus of major solo exhibitions including two at Storm King, and international city-wide exhibitions in Duisberg and Stuttgart in Germany, Chalon-sur-Saône, Paris, Valence, and Nice in France, and Valencia in Spain. During the summer of 1995, di Suvero was honored with a major installation of seven pieces along the Grand Canal to coincide with the Venice Biennale's 100th anniversary.

In 1993, Mark di Suvero married Kate Levin, Ph.D., a professor at the City University of New York and Commissioner of the New York Department of Cultural Affairs. Di Suvero and Levin have a daughter named Veri. At present, di Suvero maintains studios in Petaluma, California, Long Island City, New York, and Chalon-sur-Saône, France.

Scope and Content Note

The collection measures 6.8 linear feet (including sealed portions of the collection) and 0.263 GB, dates from 1934 to 2005, and documents the career of sculptor Mark di Suvero and the importance of his family relationships. Found within the papers are biographical material; letters to and from di Suvero family members; scattered writings by di Suvero and Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero, the artist's sister, about Mark di Suvero; drawings; a file on the Socrates Sculpture Park; a file on artist Helen Lessick, a friend of Mark di Suvero; exhibition files; printed material; photographs of the artist, artwork, and members of the di Suvero family; audio and video recordings of interviews with di Suvero; and promotional Tee Shirts. 57 folders of Mark di Suvero's letters to his brother Henry are sealed, as are 3 folders of letters to his sister Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero. Also sealed are a typescript for a book by di Suvero, a play script by Henry di Suvero, and family photographs, per the donor's request. All series contain annotations by the donor, Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero.

Arrangement

The collection has been arranged into 11 series:

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1941-2004 (Box 1; 4 folders)
- Series 2: Letters, 1956-2005, undated (Box 1, 7, and **Sealed Box 6, 8, OV 10**; 1.6 linear feet)
- Series 3: Notes and Writings, 1961-2005, undated (Box 1, and **Sealed Box 6**; 15 folders)
- Series 4: Drawings, 1983, undated (Box 1; 1 folder)
- Series 5: Socrates Sculpture Park File, 1985-2004, undated (Box 1-2, 7; 0.6 linear feet)
- Series 6: Helen Lessick File, 1986-2004 (Box 2, 7; 6 folders)
- Series 7: Exhibition Files, 1975-2003 (Box 2-3, 7; 1.4 linear feet)
- Series 8: Printed Material, 1958-2004, undated (Box 3-4, 7, OV 9; 1.4 linear feet)
- Series 9: Photographs, 1934-2004, undated (Box 4-5, **Sealed Box 6**; 37 folders, 0.263 GB; ER01)
- Series 10: Audio and Video Recordings, 1982-1994, undated (Box 5; 7 folders)
- Series 11: Promotional Tee Shirts, 1978-2001 (Box 7; 2 folders)

All series have been arranged chronologically. Unrestricted material is housed in Boxes 1-5, 7 (Sol), and OV 9. **Sealed material is housed in Boxes 6, 8 (Sol), and OV 10.**

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York
Works of art

Types of Materials:

Drawings
Interviews
Photographs
Slides (photographs)
Sound recordings
Video recordings

Names:

Lessick, Helen
Socrates Sculpture Park

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1941-2004

(Box 1; 4 folders)

Scope and Contents: This series consists of biographical accounts for various members of the di Suvero family and school records for Mark di Suvero. The curricula vitae were written by Mark di Suvero.

Box 1, Folder 1 Biographical Accounts for di Suvero Family Members, 1993-2004

Box 1, Folder 2 Curriculum Vitae Written by Mark di Suvero, 1984-1997

Box 1, Folder 3 Report Cards for Mark di Suvero, 1941-1948

Box 1, Folder 4 School Attendance Certificate for Mark di Suvero, 1944

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Series 2: Letters, 1956-2005, undated

Sealed Box 6, 8, OV 10;

Scope and Contents: The majority of the letters are from Mark di Suvero to his brother Henry and sister Marie Louise, including 60 SEALED folders of letters and several SEALED oversized letters. There are also some scattered letters to friends and colleagues including a letter containing a printed description of di Suvero's New York Court of Appeals case concerning his accident. Several of these letters are illustrated with drawings of ideas for sculpture. Other letters are those written by members of the di Suvero family to each other, and letters received from various friends and colleagues.

Box 1, Folder 5-32	Letters from di Suvero Family Members (see also Box 7), 1966-2005, undated
Box 6	SEALED Letters from Mark di Suvero to Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero (see also SEALED Box 8), 1960-1964 (3 folders)
Box 6	SEALED Letters from Mark di Suvero to Henry di Suvero (see also SEALED Box 8, OV 10), 1956-2001 (57 folders)
Box 7	Oversized letter from Mark di Suvero to Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero, 1987-1988
Box 8	SEALED Oversized letter from Mark di Suvero to Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero, 1961
Box 8	SEALED Oversized letters from Mark di Suvero to Henry di Suvero, 1958-1999, undated
Box OV 10	SEALED Oversized letters from Mark di Suvero to Henry di Suvero, 1972, undated

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Series 3: Notes and Writings, 1961-2005, undated

Sealed Box 6

Scope and Contents: This series primarily consists of Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero's notes and writings. The files containing notes for her lecture at the University of New Mexico include 2 photographs and 80 slides of Mark di Suvero's art work. There are also writings by Mark, Henry, and Victor di Suvero.

Box 1, Folder 33	Poems by Mark di Suvero, 1961, undated
Box 1, Folder 34	Typescripts of Poems Written from 1938 to 1953 by Victor di Suvero, 1998
Box 1	Notes and Writings by Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero, 1982-2005
Box 1, Folder 35	Draft Press Release for the Portland Museum, 1982
Box 1, Folder 36-37	Notes for Lecture at University of New Mexico, 1989
Box 1, Folder 38	Proposal to Cast in Bronze Gutzon Borglum's Bust of Adolph Bandelier, 1991-1993
Box 1, Folder 39	Notes Concerning Mark di Suvero Art Work Executed Between 1954 and 2004, 2005
Box 1, Folder 40-45	Miscellaneous Notes Concerning Decades of Family Events, 2004
Box 6	SEALED Typescript Draft for a Proposed Book by Mark di Suvero, circa 1998
Box 6	SEALED Play Script, The Ballad of Rachel Corrie, by Henry di Suvero, 2003

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Series 4: Drawings, 1983, undated

(Box 1; 1 folder)

Scope and Contents: Three small ink sketches by Mark di Suvero are designs for sculpture.

Box 1, Folder 46 Ink Sketches, 1983, undated

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Series 5: Socrates Sculpture Park File, 1985-2004, undated

(Box 1-2, 7; 0.6 linear feet)

Scope and Contents: This series contains material concerning the Socrates Sculpture Park, an outdoor space where sculptors are invited to create and exhibit their work, created through the Athena Foundation. The photographs include one showing New York Mayor Koch presenting co-founder Enrico Martignoni with an award for the Park. Artifacts include two matchbooks and a tee shirt advertising the Park.

Box 1, Folder 47-48	Letters, 1985-1996
Box 1, Folder 49	Typescript of the Proposal, 1988
Box 1, Folder 50	Inventory and Analysis Report, 1988
Box 1, Folder 51	Notes and Writings, 1986-2001, undated
Box 1, Folder 52-53	Clippings, 1985-2001
Box 1, Folder 54	Press Packet, 1985-1986
Box 1, Folder 55	Miscellaneous Press Releases, 1986-2003
Box 1, Folder 56-64	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs (see also Box 7), 1986-2004
Box 1, Folder 65	Brochure for the Athena Foundation, 1986
Box 1, Folder 66-67	Brochures for Socrates Sculpture Park, 1990-1992
Box 1, Folder 68	Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1986-2004
Box 1, Folder 69	Photographs, 1986-1990
Box 2, Folder 1	Videotape Socrates Sculpture Park, 1986
Box 2, Folder 2	Artifacts (see Also Box 7), 2003, undated
Box 7	Oversized Exhibition Announcement from the Socrates Sculpture Park File, 1987
Box 7	Socrates Sculpture Park tee shirt, 2003

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Series 6: Helen Lessick File, 1986-2004

(Box 2, 7; 6 folders)

Scope and Contents: This series contains miscellaneous material relating to artist Helen Lessick, an Athena grant-funded artist and friend of Mark di Suvero and the Martignoni family, who exhibited her work at the Socrates Sculpture Park in its early days, and at Chalon-sur-Saône's *La Vie des Formes*.

Box 2, Folder 3	Letters (see also Box 7), 1990-2003
Box 2, Folder 4	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1987-2004
Box 2, Folder 5	Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1986-2003
Box 2, Folder 6	Baseball Cards Created by Helen Lessick, 1999
Box 2, Folder 7	Bookmarks Created by Helen Lessick, 2003
Box 7	Oversized Illustrated Letter from Helen Lessick File, 1990

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Series 7: Exhibition Files, 1975-2003

(Box 2-3, 7; 1.4 linear feet)

Scope and Contents: The exhibition files contain miscellaneous material relating to specific exhibitions or installations by Mark di Suvero. Most files contain printed materials, catalogs, announcements, notes, a few essays, letters, and photographs. Two of the exhibition files also contain video recordings: La Biennale di Venezia, XLCI International Art Exhibition, Venice, Italy, 1994-1996; Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, New York, 1995-1996.

Box 2, Folder 8-14	Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1975-1976
Box 2, Folder 15-21	Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, New York, 1985
Box 2, Folder 22-26	Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany, 1988
Box 2, Folder 27-36	Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valence, France, 1989-1991
Box 2, Folder 37-40	Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice, France, 1991
Box 2, Folder 41-45	Unveiling of L'illume (Erleuchtung), Parliament Building, Bonn, Germany, 1992
Box 2, Folder 46	Centre Julio González, Valencian Institute of Modern Art (IVAM), Valencia, Spain, 1994-1995
Box 2, Folder 47-53	La Biennale di Venezia, XLCI International Art Exhibition, Venice, Italy, 1994-1996
Box 2, Folder 54-60	Dedication of Sea Change, South Beach Park, San Francisco, California, 1995
Box 3, Folder 1-8	Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, New York, 1995-1996
Box 3, Folder 9-15	Mark di Suvero in Paris Exhibition, Paris, France, 1997-1998
Box 3, Folder 16	Unveiling of Tyne Anew, 1999
Box 3, Folder 17-20	Works from a Private Collection, Danese Gallery, New York, New York, 2000
Box 3, Folder 21-25	Installation of Beppe, University of Missouri at St. Louis and Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis, Missouri, 2003
Box 7	Oversized Letter from Mark di Suvero to Henry di Suvero, from the La Biennale di Venezia Exhibition File, 1994
Box 7	Oversized Posters from a Press Packet in Exhibition File for Mark di Suvero in Paris, 1997

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Series 8: Printed Material, 1958-2004, undated

(Box 3-4, 7, OV 9; 1.4 linear feet)

Scope and Contents: This series consists of printed material that does not directly relate to specific exhibitions. Exhibition announcements include a poster for di Suvero's first solo exhibition at the Green Gallery in 1960. Exhibition catalogs for *The Hands*, 1996-1997, and for the Orange County Museum of Art solo exhibition, 1998, are autographed.

Box 3, Folder 26-58	Clippings (see also Box 7), 1960-2004, undated
Box 3, Folder 59	Press Releases, 1966-2000
Box 3, Folder 60-68	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs for Mark di Suvero (see also OV 9), 1958-1986
Box 4, Folder 1-18	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs for Mark di Suvero, 1987-2004
Box 4, Folder 19-21	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs for Others (see also Box 7), 1976-1995
Box 4, Folder 22	Lecture Announcements, 2000-2001
Box 4, Folder 23-26	Brochures for Miscellaneous Art Galleries, 1973-2004, undated
Box 4, Folder 27	Brochures for the Sale of Art Work, 1973-1993
Box 4, Folder 28	Travel Brochures, 1990-1995, undated
Box 4, Folder 29	Miscellaneous Brochures, 1991-2001
Box 4, Folder 30	Note Cards with Photographs of Art Work by Mark di Suvero, 1996-2001, undated
Box 4, Folder 31	Postcards with Photographs of Art Work by Mark di Suvero, 1998, undated
Box 4, Folder 32	Miscellaneous Picture Postcards, undated
Box 4, Folder 33	Booklet Summer War Haiku by Jack Crimmins, 2002
Box 4, Folder 34	Book New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970 by Henry Geldzahler, 1969
Box 4, Folder 35	Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1993-2000, undated
Box 7	Oversized Clippings, 1964-1972
Box 7	Oversized Exhibition Announcement for Others, 1988

Box OV 9

Oversized Exhibition Announcements for Mark di Suvero, 1960-1986

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Series 9: Photographs, 1934-2004, undated

0.263 Gigabytes (ER01)

1.3 Linear feet (Boxes 4-5, 6 (Sealed))

Scope and Contents: Photographs are of Mark di Suvero, members of the di Suvero family, di Suvero's studios and art work. Many of the photographs depict a combination of all these elements, so they have been organized into one chronology in order to maintain the sense of each occasion. The slides, found here also in digital format, of di Suvero's work belonged to friend and dealer Richard Bellamy.

Box 4, Folder 36-49	Photographs of the di Suvero Family and Mark di Suvero's Art Work, 1934-2004 Includes born-digital records, see ER01
Box 5, Folder 1	Statement regarding Slides and Digital Images of Mark di Suvero's Art Work Executed from the 1960s to 1990s, 2004 Includes born-digital records, see ER01
Folder ER01	Mark di Suvero's Art Work Executed from the 1960s to 1990s, Digital Images, 2004 0.263 Gigabytes (183 computer files)
Box 5, Folder 2-3	Mark di Suvero's Art Work Executed from the 1960s to 1990s, Slides, undated
Box 6	SEALED Photographs of the di Suvero Family and Mark di Suvero's Art Work, 1963-1998, undated (19 folders)
Box 6	SEALED Miscellaneous Negatives, undated

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Series 10: Audio and Video Recordings, 1982-1994, undated

(Box 5; 7 folders)

Scope and Contents: This series presents aural and visual insights into Mark di Suvero's work. With the exception of *La Vie des Formes*, all videotapes contain interviews of Mark di Suvero.

Box 5, Folder 4	Audio-Cassette Lecture by Marie Louise Martignoni di Suvero Speaking about Mark di Suvero, Portland Museum of Art, Oregon, 1982
Box 5, Folder 5	Videotape Mark di Suvero: Rêve des Signes (Dream of Signs), undated
Box 5, Folder 6	Videotape Storm King, 1987
Box 5, Folder 7	Videotape La Vie des Formes by Dominique Evrard, 1988-1989
Box 5, Folder 8	Videotape In the Steel: A Portrait of Mark di Suvero, 1991
Box 5, Folder 9	Videotape Sculptors at Storm King, 1992
Box 5, Folder 10	Videotape Echt Wahr Träume (Genuinely True Dreams) by Nina Hagar, 1994

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Series 11: Promotional Tee Shirts, 1978-2001

(Box 7; 2 folders)

Scope and Contents: These Tee Shirts are promotional items from an unveiling event for Mark di Suvero's sculpture Potowatami, and from a charity event.

Box 7 Tee Shirt from the Unveiling of Potowatami, 1978

Box 7 Tee Shirt from the Art Walk 2001 for the Venice Family Clinic, 2001

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