



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Don Eddy and Leigh Behnke  
Papers, 1966-2009, in the Archives of American Art

Catherine S. Gaines

August 16, 2012

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
Biographical Note.....	2
Scope and Content Note.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	3
Container Listing .....	4
Series 1: Don Eddy papers, 1966-2009.....	4
Series 2: Leigh Behnke papers, 1974-2009.....	7

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Don Eddy and Leigh Behnke papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.eddydon
<b>Date:</b>	1966-2009
<b>Extent:</b>	7.2 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Eddy, Don, 1944-
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Summary:</b>	The Don Eddy and Leigh Behnke papers, 1966-2009, measure 7.2 linear feet. Photographic materials, printed material, and writings document the realist painters' work, working methods, and exhibitions. Also found are subject files, some professional correspondence and personal photographs.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Donated by Don Eddy and Leigh Behnke in 2009.

### Processing Information

This collection was processed to a minimum level and a finding aid prepared by Catherine S. Gaines in 2012. The Archives of American Art has implemented minimal processing tactics when possible in order to increase information about and access to more of our collections. Minimal processing included arrangement to the series and folder levels. Generally, items within folders were simply verified with folder titles, but not arranged further. Folders within boxes were not numbered. The collection was rehoused in archival containers and folders, but not all staples and clips were removed.

### Preferred Citation

Don Eddy and Leigh Behnke papers, 1966-2009. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

### Ownership and Literary Rights

The Don Eddy and Leigh Behnke 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.

## Biographical Note

Don Eddy (b. 1944) and Leigh Behnke (b. 1946) are realist painters in New York City. They are married and both teach at the School of Visual Arts. Eddy is one of the thirteen original Photorealists.

Don Eddy was born in Long Beach, California. From around age ten until he left home to attend college, he worked at his father's auto body shop and became proficient in airbrush technique and color matching paint. Eddy studied with Jean Charlot at the University of Hawaii (B.F.A. 1967, M.F.A. 1969). His early paintings employed pictorial illusion and their subject matter came from material culture; part-time work as a tourist photographer in Honolulu prompted him to experiment with and think deeply about photography, leading him to the style that would come to be known as Photorealism. He was first recognized for paintings of automobiles done in acrylic using the spray technique learned at the auto body shop. From the 1970s and well into the next decade, Eddy's work was object oriented. Later, he produced "dream" paintings that included details from Old Master paintings, floating objects that introduced psychological elements and perceptual challenges. Over the next decade he simplified his imagery by pursuing still life and nature painting with complex, layered surfaces. Using photographs he takes himself as source material, Eddy continues to paint urban and nature scenes and has developed elaborate procedures for underpainting and overpainting. He teaches at the School of Visual Arts and is represented by Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York.

Leigh Behnke, a native of Hartford, Connecticut, moved to New York City to attend Pratt Institute (B.F.A. 1969) and later studied at New York University (M.A. 1976). Behnke paints in oil and watercolor using her own photographs and digital images as source material. Interests in architecture, interiors, history, memory, nature, and scientific concepts are reflected in her work. She combines images and employs multi panels (diptych and polyptych) as a device for focusing on perception and pictorial space, commenting on images, and redefining subjects from other vantage points. Behnke has taught at the School of Visual Arts since 1979. She is represented by Fischbach Gallery, New York, and Plus One Gallery, London.

---

## Scope and Content Note

The Don Eddy and Leigh Behnke papers, 1966-2009, measure 7.2 linear feet. Photographic materials, printed material, and writings document the realist painters' work, working methods, and exhibitions. Also found are subject files, some professional correspondence, and personal photographs.

Don Eddy's papers consist largely of photographic materials, writings, and printed material. Photographic materials include images of completed work and a significant amount of source material that documents Eddy's working methods. Also found are exhibition installation views, personal and travel pictures. Writings include a dissertation and two theses in which he figures prominently. Most printed material mentions Eddy or contains reproductions of his work.

The papers of Leigh Behnke, less voluminous than her husband's, are comprised mainly of photographic materials, printed material, and subject files. Among the photographic materials are images that served as source material and document her working methods. All printed material mentions Behnke or contains reproductions of her work. Subject files document projects, exhibitions, and miscellaneous topics.

---

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 2 series:

- Series 1: Don Eddy papers, 1966-2009 (Boxes 1-6, 9-10; 5.8 linear feet)
- Series 2: Leigh Behnke papers, 1974-2009 (Boxes 6-9; 1.4 linear feet)

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Painters -- New York (State) -- New York  
Painting from photographs  
Photo-realism

Types of Materials:

Photographs  
Writings

Names:

Behnke, Leigh, 1946-

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Don Eddy papers, 1966-2009

#### 5.8 Linear feet (Boxes 1-6, 9-10)

The papers of Don Eddy include a variety of materials that document the realist painter's work, working methods, exhibitions, and his place in the history of Photorealism.

Biographical notes in a small notebook include chronological lists of all schools attended since kindergarten, employment history, and exhibition record; the same volume includes financial notes, names and addresses. Other financial records, also in a small notebook, record travel expenses. Family material concerns the memorial service for his father-in-law, Allen Frederick Behnke, at which Eddy spoke. Interviews may have been conducted as research for articles. Correspondence with Leda Cempellin concerns her writings and research about Eddy. Writings include an article and two theses about Eddy. Subject files concern arrangements by Galerie M. E. Thelen to exhibit Eddy's work at 5 venues in Germany, including "Documenta 5" (1972); and a surprise gift from artists to commemorate the Nancy Hoffman Gallery's 20th anniversary.

Printed material consists mainly of catalogs from Eddy's group and solo exhibitions and periodicals containing articles, reviews, and reproductions. The few printed items that do not mention Eddy concern Photorealism, friends or students. Books include: *Conversazioni con Don Eddy/Conversations with Don Eddy* by Leda Cempellin ; *Don Eddy: The Resonance of Realism in the Art of Postwar America* by Virginia Anne Bonito; and *L'imperrealismo "Fotographica" Americano in pittura: Risonanze storiche nella East e nella West Coast* . Miscellaneous printed items include reproductions of artwork by Eddy, newsletters, and a press kit concerning his 2000 solo exhibition at Duke University Museum of Art.

Artwork dates from the period when Eddy was studying at the University of Hawaii. His sketchbook contains mostly pencil drawings and includes some notes and brief writings. Photographs - along with some digital images, negatives, and 35-mm color slides - are mainly photographs taken by Eddy for inspiration and reference use, sometimes accompanied by drawings and brief notes. In addition there are a few views of people, travel, exhibition installations, and artwork by Eddy.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Notes, Financial Record, Membership Certificate, Family, circa 1960s-circa 1998
Box 1, Folder 2	Interview Transcripts, Don Eddy with Rose Hartman and L.L., 2000, undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence with Leda Cempellin, 1998-2000
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters to Eddy, 1998-2000
Box 1	Writings
Box 1, Folder 5	Articles about Eddy, circa 1980s-1990s
Box 1, Folder 6	Dissertation, "I ruoli dell'iperrealismo Americano a <i>Documenta 5</i> , Kassel 1972" by Leda Cempellin (Universita degli studi Parma), 2003

Box 1, Folder 7	Thesis, "Aspetti dell'iperrealismo Americano storica" by Leda Cempellin (Universita degli studi di Padova), 1999
Box 1, Folder 8	Thesis, "Hvad er superrealismen? Omden ekstreme realism i billedkunsten 1965-1980" by Kristian Handberg (Aarhus Universitet, 2007), 2007
Box 1, Folder 9	Inventory Cards, circa 1969-1970s
Box 1, Folder 10	Subject File - Galerie M. E. Thelen, 1970-1972
Box 1, Folder 11	Subject File - Nancy Hoffman Gallery, 1992
Box 1	Printed Material
Box 1, Folder 12-14	Books, 1964-2004
Box 1, Folder 15-17	Clippings, 1969-2000, undated
Box 1, Folder 18	Exhibition Announcements and Invitations, 1970-2000
Box 1, Folder 19-23	Exhibition Catalogs, circa 1970s, 1970-1972
Box 2, Folder 1-19	Exhibition Catalogs, circa 1970s-1990s <i>Oversized material housed in Box 9</i>
Box 3, Folder 1-3	Exhibition Catalogs, 2001-2009
Box 3, Folder 4	Miscellaneous Printed Items, circa 1973-2000
Box 3, Folder 5-19	Periodicals, 1971-2006 <i>Oversized material housed in Box 9</i>
Box 4, Folder 1	Artwork - Drawings, undated
Box 4, Folder 2	Artwork Mezzotint and 4 Etching plates, undated
Box 4, Folder 3	Sketchbook, circa 1967-1969
Box 4	Photographic Materials
Box 4, Folder 4	People, 1966-circa 1999
Box 4, Folder 5	Travel Views, 1967-circa 1990s

Box 4, Folder 6	Exhibition Installation Views, 1968-1970, undated
Box 4, Folder 7-15	Artwork by Eddy (1967-2009), circa 1967-2009 <i>Oversized material housed in Box 9</i>
Box 4, Folder 16-25	Source Material, circa 1960s-circa 1980s <i>Oversized material housed in Box 10</i>
Box 5, Folder 1-22	Source Material, circa 1970s-circa 2000s <i>Oversized material housed in Box 10</i>
Box 6, Folder 1-7	Source Material, circa 1990s-circa 2000s <i>Oversized material housed in Box 10</i>
Box 9	Oversized Exhibition Catalogs from Box 1, Folders 19-23, Box 2, Folders 1-19, Box 3, Folders 1-3, 1994, 1972
Box 9	Oversized Periodical from Box 3, Folder 19, 2003
Box 9	Oversized Photographs of Artwork by Eddy (executed circa 1968-circa 1970s) from Box 4, Folders 7-15, circa 1970s
Box 10	Oversized Photographs - Source Material from Box 4, Folders 16-25, Box 5, Folders 1-22, Box 6, Folders 1-7, circa 1970s-circa 2000s

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*



## Series 2: Leigh Behnke papers, 1974-2009

### 1.4 Linear feet (Boxes 6-9)

Leigh Behnke's papers document her professional career, work, and working methods. Biographical material consists of two brief interviews conducted by Leda Cempellin and Jeri Hise. Correspondence concerns exhibitions and reproduction permissions; also included is a letter of recommendaiton on behalf of Behnke. Writings by Behnke are artist's statements, some general and others concerning specific paintings. Also, there is a piece about representational painting that may be the text of an article or talk.

Subject files consisting of correspondence, photographs, notes and printed material reflect Behnke's professional activities and interests. A few files might be source material. Printed material is mostly exhibition catalogs for Behnke's group shows. Periodicals include article, reveiws, and reprocutions of her work. In addition to a book and calendars reproducing her work, miscellaneous printed items include a notice of the "Mo' Ladies and Some Gents" 2008 swim team that included Leigh Behnke.

Most of the photographs, digital images, slides and negatives served a source material for Behnke's paintings; some are accompanied by drawings and notes. There are also views of Leigh Behnke and Don Eddy, as well as images of her artwork.

Box 6, Folder 8	Interview Transcripts, 1999-2000
Box 6, Folder 9	Resumes, circa 1979-circa 1999
Box 6, Folder 10	Correspondence, 1979-2005
Box 6; Box 6, Folder 11	Writings by Leigh Behnke - Artist's Statements and Other Writings, 1984-2009
Box 6, Folder 12	Writings About Leigh Behnke, 1997, undated
Box 6	Subject Files
Box 6, Folder 13	Cempellin, Leda, 2000-2005
Box 6, Folder 14	Charleston, undated
Box 6, Folder 15	City Oils, undated
Box 6, Folder 16	Drawings, undated
Box 6, Folder 17	Elaine Baker Gallery, 2000-2001
Box 6, Folder 18	Elipse, circa 2002
Box 6, Folder 19	Exhibition Planning, circa 1997

Box 6, Folder 20	Fischbach Brochure, 1991
Box 6, Folder 21	Grant Applications, circa 1988
Box 6, Folder 22	Grant Applications, E. D. Foundation, 1999-2000
Box 6, Folder 23	Hanbury Gate, undated
Box 6, Folder 24	Information and Additions, undated
Box 6, Folder 25	Lake Landscape (E. Baker), circa 2000
Box 6, Folder 26	Leigh (full packet), 2004
Box 6, Folder 27	Merchant House Museum, 2004
Box 6, Folder 28	Old Images, circa 1990s-circa 2005
Box 6, Folder 29	Painting Titles and Miscellaneous Printed Items, 1990-1997, undated
Box 6, Folder 30	Press Clippings, 1967-2006
Box 6, Folder 31	Projected Paintings, undated
Box 6, Folder 32	Reference Information, etc., undated
Box 6, Folder 33	Reviews, Exhibition Announcements, and Miscellaneous Printed Items, 1978-1983
Box 6, Folder 34-35	Sagamore Hill, New Orleans, circa 1999
Box 6, Folder 36	Walla Walla [Exhibition Installation Notes?], undated
Box 6	Printed Material
Box 6, Folder 37	Exhibition Announcements and Invitations, 1978-2008, undated
Box 6, Folder 38-41	Exhibition Catalogs, 1974-2002
Box 7, Folder 1-2	Miscellaneous Printed Items, 1984-2008
Box 7	Photographic Materials

Box 7, Folder 3	Leigh Behnke and Don Eddy, 1974 <i>Oversized material housed in Box 9</i>
Box 7, Folder 4	Artwork by Behnke, 1974, circa 1991-circa 2000
Box 7, Folder 5-13	Source Material, circa 1970s-circa 2000s
Box 8, Folder 1-10	Source Material, circa 1970s-2000s
Box 9	Oversized Photographs of Leigh Behnke from Box 7, Folder 3, circa 1980s-1996

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*