



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Matsumi Kanemitsu Papers, circa 1947-1998, in the Archives of American Art

Sabine Lipten and Rihoko Ueno

The processing and digitization of this collection received Federal support from the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund, administered by the National Collections Program and the Smithsonian Collections Advisory Committee. Additional funding for the processing and digitization of this collection was provided by the Asian Pacific American Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, and the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

2024/05/15

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Matsumi Kanemitsu papers
Date:	circa 1947-1998
Identifier:	AAA.kanemats
Creator:	Kanemitsu, Matsumi
Extent:	3.4 Linear feet
Language:	The collection is in English and Japanese.
Summary:	The papers of Matsumi Kanemitsu measure 3.4 linear feet and date from 1947-1998. The papers document Kanemitsu's career through biographical material; correspondence with friends, family, artists, universities, and galleries; professional files such as teaching files and work on juried shows; personal and business financial records; printed materials, and photographs.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Matsumi Kanemitsu papers were donated to the Archives of American Art in 1994 and 1998 by Nancy Uyemura, Kanemitsu's former student, friend, and executor.

Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2024 and is available on the Archives of American Art website.

Processing Information

The collection was minimally processed, and a finding aid prepared by Sabine Lipten in 2023. The collection was fully processed, prepared for digitization, and the finding aid updated by Rihoko Ueno in 2024 with funding provided by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund, administered by the National Collections Program and the Smithsonian Collections Advisory Committee. Additional funding for the processing and digitization of this collection was provided by the Asian Pacific American Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, and the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

Preferred Citation

Matsumi Kanemitsu papers, circa 1947-1998. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

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Biographical / Historical

Matsumi Kanemitsu (1922-1992), also known as Mike Kanemitsu, was a Japanese American painter based in both New York City, New York and Los Angeles, California. Although born in Utah, Kanemitsu lived in Japan until he was eighteen. In 1940 he returned to the United States, joining the Army in 1941. But after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he was detained in several U.S. army camps due to his Japanese ancestry even as he actively served in the military. During this time, he began to draw with pen and ink and pastels. Eventually, he was released and volunteered for overseas duty as a hospital assistant in Europe. His Army tour ended in 1946.

After the war, he studied with Fernand Leger in Paris; with Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Harry Sternberg, and others at the Art Student's League in New York; and with sculptor Karl Metzler in Baltimore. A highly recognized second generation Abstract Expressionist in New York, Kanemitsu came to live permanently in Los Angeles after receiving a Ford Foundation Fellowship in 1961 to work at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, where he created a series of prints that translated sumi painting techniques into lithography.

He exhibited widely throughout the United States, as well as Japan, and his work is owned by a number of public institutions in the United States and Japan. In addition to his practice, Kanemitsu also held professorial positions at a number of universities and art institutions including the University of California, Berkeley; the Chouinard Art Institute; and the Otis Art Institute.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Matsumi Kanemitsu measure 3.4 linear feet and date from 1947-1998. The papers document Kanemitsu's career through biographical material; correspondence with friends, family, artists, universities, and galleries; professional files such as teaching files and work on juried shows; personal and business financial records; printed materials, and photographs.

Biographical material includes resumes, contact and business cards, assorted notes written by Kanemitsu in English and Japanese, and National Geographic membership certificates. There is also a childhood drawing by his daughter Patia Valazquez and a childhood painting by Harumi Zoha Kanemitsu.

Correspondence consist of a mix of personal letters with family and friends, many of which were other artists, as well as professional letters with galleries, museums and colleagues in both English and Japanese. Notable correspondence include the Akron Art museum, Harold Rosenberg, Harriet and Esteban Vicente, MOMA, Paul Jenkins, Peter Pollack, William De Kooning and others.

Professional files document Kanemitsu's academic appointments, roles serving on the exhibition jury for the *Utah '88: Painting and Sculpture* exhibition and as a Friends of Little Tokyo Arts (FOLTA) member, commission work and an application for the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship.

Personal business records include sale, consignment and loan receipts, shipping records, gallery correspondence and other documents related to the creation, commission and sale of Kanemitsu's work such as artwork inventory lists, gallery consignment records and commission invoices. This series also includes records pertaining to Kanemitsu's travel and business expenses, personal finances and art collecting.

Printed Material includes exhibition announcements, invitations and catalogs, magazines, posters, a posthumous retrospective exhibition catalog written in English and Japanese, clippings in English and Japanese and other miscellaneous materials.

Photographic Material primarily include photographs of Kanemitsu, his children and friends. Also found are photographs of artwork, miscellaneous photographs of a winter landscape, a house and street in Japan and two slides of artwork titled *Phil*.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as six series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1947-1992 (0.4 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1947-1992 (1.3 Linear feet: Box 1-2)
- Series 3: Professional Files, circa 1961-1990 (0.3 Linear feet: Box 2)
- Series 4: Personal Business , circa 1959-1991 (0.4 Linear feet: Box 3)
- Series 5: Printed Material, 1961-1998 (0.8 Linear feet: Box 3, OVs 4-7)
- Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1960-1992 (0.2 Linear feet: Box 3)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Abstract expressionism
Asian American artists
Asian American painters
Japanese American artists
Japanese Americans -- Forced removal and internment -- 1942-1945

Occupations:

Painters -- California -- Los Angeles

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1947-1992

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material includes resumes, contact cards, business cards, assorted notes written by Kanemitsu in English and Japanese, National Geographic membership certificates and a Los Angeles pet license application. The contact cards are noteworthy because they consist of profiles of individuals created by Kanemitsu with details such as their address, job, connection or relationship to Kanemitsu (how they met), art they own by Kanemitsu, hobbies, etc.

Arrangement: The materials in this series are arranged in alphabetical order by folder title. The contact cards are grouped together and arranged by regions within the U.S., followed by locations abroad.

Available Formats: The bulk of the materials in this series have been digitized, except for duplicates.

Box 1, Folder 1 [Biographical Profiles and Resumes, circa 1947-1992](#)

Box 1, Folder 2 [Business Cards and Addresses for Contacts, circa 1961-1992](#)

Contact Cards

Box 1, Folder 3 [Connecticut, New York City, Long Island \(1 of 2\), circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 4 [Connecticut, New York City, Long Island \(2 of 2\), circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 5 [Hawaii, circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 6 [Los Angeles \(1 of 2\), circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 7 [Los Angeles \(2 of 2\), circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 8 [Los Angeles County Museum Art Council , circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 9 [Mid-Atlantic United States, circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 10 [Midwest and Western United States, circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 11 [San Diego and Santa Barbara, circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 12 [San Francisco and Berkley, circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 13 [Southern United States, circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 14 [Canada and Europe, circa 1970-1991](#)

Box 1, Folder 15	Japan, South America, U.S.S.R., circa 1970-1991
Box 1, Folder 16	Address Unknown, circa 1970-1991
Box 1, Folder 17	Los Angeles Dog License Application and National Geographic Membership Certificates, 1966, 1969, circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 18	Miscellaneous Notes, circa 1964-1980
Box 1, Folder 19	Miscellaneous Pastel and Painting by Others, circa 1970s Notes: Childhood pastel drawing by Patia Valazquez and small paint sketch by Harumi Zoha Kanemitsu.

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Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1947-1992

1.3 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence consists of a mix of personal letters with family and friends, many of whom were other artists, as well as professional letters with galleries, museums and colleagues in both English and Japanese. Notable correspondence includes the Akron Art museum, Harold Rosenberg, Harriet and Esteban Vicente, MOMA, Paul Jenkins, Peter Pollack, and others. Also found are holiday and greeting cards in both English and Japanese.

Arrangement: The bulk of this series is arranged in alphabetical order. The Japanese correspondence is grouped separately from the English correspondence since that arrangement reflects the original order of the materials. Generic holiday and greeting cards that only have signatures of the senders are grouped together towards the end of the series.

Available Formats: The bulk of the materials in this series have been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include duplicates and greeting cards.

Box 1, Folder 20	Matsumi Kanemitsu Family Correspondence, circa 1964-1989
Box 1, Folder 21	Akron Art Institute, 1963-1964
Box 1, Folder 22	American Federation of Arts, 1963-1964
Box 1, Folder 23	Art Center College of Design, 1970
Box 1, Folder 24	University of Arizona, 1970, 1981
Box 1, Folder 25	A, 1963-1986
Box 1, Folder 26	University of California, Berkeley, 1966-1978
Box 1, Folder 27	B, 1968-1989
Box 1, Folder 28	Chouinard Art School, 1965, 1970
Box 1, Folder 29	Cowgill, Pricilla, circa 1970
Box 1, Folder 30	C, 1961-1989
Box 1, Folder 31	Dwan Gallery, 1960-1963
Box 1, Folder 32	D, 1961-1988
Box 1, Folder 33	F, 1961-1990
Box 1, Folder 34	G, 1962-1990
Box 1, Folder 35	Hadeishi, Nob, circa 1964-1966, 1988

Box 1, Folder 36	Horelick, Jules, circa 1963-1983
Box 1, Folder 37	H, 1961-1989
Box 1, Folder 38	I, circa 1963-1989
Box 1, Folder 39	Jenkins, Paul, circa 1961-circa 1967 Image(s): Paul Jenkins
Box 1, Folder 40	Jenkins, Paul, circa 1967-1982
Box 1, Folder 41	J, 1978-1990
Box 1, Folder 42	K, 1965-1966, 1977-1988
Box 1, Folder 43	L, 1962-1968, 1981-1989
Box 2, Folder 1	M, 1954-1989
Box 2, Folder 2	Nagamatsu, Ernest, circa 1987-1990
Box 2, Folder 3	Nordland, Gerald, 1963-1985
Box 2, Folder 4	N, circa 1964-1991
Box 2, Folder 5	O, 1966-1970, 1983-1986
Box 2, Folder 6	P, 1965-1966, 1975-1988
Box 2, Folder 7	R, circa 1961-1984 Notes: Includes letters from Harold Rosenberg.
Box 2, Folder 8	Smithsonian National Collection of Fine Arts, 1966
Box 2, Folder 9	S, 1964-1991
Box 2, Folder 10	Tamarind Lithography Workshop, circa 1961-1979
Box 2, Folder 11	T, circa 1965-1990
Box 2, Folder 12	Uyemura, Nancy, 1985
Box 2, Folder 13	Vicente, Harriet, circa 1965-1984
Box 2, Folder 14	V, circa 1970-1983
Box 2, Folder 15	Wayne, June, 1979-1991

	Image(s): June Wayne
Box 2, Folder 16	Williams, Marlene, 1963-1964
Box 2, Folder 17	Woelffer, Emerson, 1965-1970, 1991
Box 2, Folder 18	W-Z, 1963-1983
Box 2, Folder 19	First Names Only, A-J, 1964-1988
Box 2, Folder 20	First Names Only, K-N, 1962-1991
Box 2, Folder 21	First Names Only, P-Z, 1964-1991
Box 2, Folder 22	Japanese Correspondence - A-H, 1965-1982
Box 2, Folder 23	Japanese Correspondence - Izumi, Toshiaki, 1978-1982
Box 2, Folder 24	Japanese Correspondence - I, circa 1979-circa 1981
Box 2, Folder 25	Japanese Correspondence - Kanemitsu, Keiko, circa 1985-1989
Box 2, Folder 26	Japanese Correspondence - Kanemitsu, Shizuma, 1980-1982
Box 2, Folder 27	Japanese Correspondence - Kanemitsu, Yoji, 1979-1985
Box 2, Folder 28	Japanese Correspondence - Kanemitsu, Yoji, 1986-1989
Box 2, Folder 29	Japanese Correspondence - K, circa 1976-1990
Box 2, Folder 30	Japanese Correspondence - Matsuo, Yasuhito, 1979-1982
Box 2, Folder 31	Japanese Correspondence - Minami Gallery, 1978-1979
Box 2, Folder 32	Japanese Correspondence - M-O, 1971-circa 1981
Box 2, Folder 33	Japanese Correspondence - Oguchi, Yoshio, 1979-1980
Box 2, Folder 34	Japanese Correspondence - S, 1970-1979
Box 2, Folder 35	Japanese Correspondence - Teramoto, Michio, 1979-1982
Box 2, Folder 36	Japanese Correspondence - T-Y, 1974-1991
Box 2, Folder 37	Japanese Correspondence - Unidentified Correspondents, 1947, 1971-1991 Notes: Correspondence is in chronological order.

Box 2, Folder 38 [Japanese Correspondence - Unidentified Correspondents \(Undated\), circa 1947-
circa 1992](#)

Box 2, Folder 39 [Holiday Cards from Matsumi Kanemitsu, circa 1947-1992](#)

Box 2, Folder 40 Greeting Cards and Birth Announcements, 1964-1992
Notes: Generic greeting and holiday cards with only signatures of the
senders.

Box 2, Folder 41 Greeting Cards and Birth Announcements, 1964-1992
Notes: Generic greeting and holiday cards with only signatures of the
senders.

Box 2, Folder 42 Japanese Greeting Cards, 1979-1983
Notes: Generic greeting and holiday cards with only signatures of the
senders.

Box 2, Folder 43 [Envelopes, No Contents, circa 1977-1991](#)

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Series 3: Professional Files, circa 1961-1990

0.3 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Professional files document Matsumi Kanemitsu's academic appointments, roles serving on the exhibition jury for *Utah '88: Painting and Sculpture* and as a Friends of Little Tokyo Arts (FOLTA) member, as well as commission work. Also included is an application for the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship.

Arrangement: The materials in this series have been arranged in alphabetical order by folder title.

Available Formats: The bulk of the materials in this series have been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include duplicates and student evaluations and grades.

Box 2, Folder 44	C² Products International Logo Design Commission, 1988
Box 2, Folder 45	Chouinard Art School Teaching Schedule and Contract, 1965-1971
Box 2, Folder 46	Friends of Little Tokyo Art Membership List and Auction Planning Documents, 1980-1981
Box 2, Folder 47	George Brown Congressional Campaign Luncheon Planning Documents, 1970
Box 2, Folder 48	Japanese Exhibition Signed Guestbook (Photocopies), circa 1964-1990
Box 2, Folder 49	John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship Application, 1965
Box 2, Folder 50	Student Evaluations, circa 1961-1990
Box 2, Folder 51	Teaching Paystubs, 1967, 1980-1981
Box 2, Folder 52	University of California, Berkeley Materials, 1966, 1970
Box 2, Folder 53	Utah '88: Painting and Sculpture Exhibition Juror, 1988

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Series 4: Personal Business Records, circa 1959-1991

0.4 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Personal business records include sales, consignment and loan receipts, shipping records, gallery correspondence and other documents related to the creation, commission and sale of Kanemitsu's work such as artwork inventory lists, gallery consignment records and commission invoices. This series also includes records pertaining to Kanemitsu's art supplies expenses and art collecting activity.

Arrangement: The materials in this series are arranged in alphabetical order.

Available Formats: The bulk of the materials in this series have been digitized. Materials which have not been digitized include duplicates as well as the "personal expenses" and "travel expenses" folders which respectively contain miscellaneous bills and receipts for utilities and plane tickets.

Box 3, Folder 1	Angel Press Printing Order, 1990
Box 3, Folder 2	Art Collecting Records, 1968, 1981-1990
Box 3, Folder 3	Art Inventory and Price Lists, circa 1963-1989
Box 3, Folder 4	Art Supplies Expenses, 1981-1990
Box 3, Folder 5	Business Tax Registration and Japanese Tax Payment Certificate, 1983, 1991
Box 3, Folder 6	Costa Concepts Fine Arts and Design Studio Artwork Appraisal and Sale Listing, circa 1985
Box 3, Folder 7	Disbound Notebook of Financial Records and Expenses, 1983, 1990
Box 3, Folder 8	Gallery Records - Janus Gallery Commission Invoices and Consignment Forms, 1978-1985
Box 3, Folder 9	Gallery Records - Louis Newman Galleries Consignment Forms and Sale Records, 1983-1984
Box 3, Folder 10	Gallery Records - Louis Newman Galleries Consignment Forms and Sale Records, 1985
Box 3, Folder 11	Gallery Records - Louis Newman Galleries Consignment Forms and Sale Records, 1986
Box 3, Folder 12	Gallery Records - Louis Newman Galleries Consignment Forms and Sale Records, 1987
Box 3, Folder 13	Gallery Records - Louis Newman Galleries Consignment Forms and Sale Records, 1988-1991
Box 3, Folder 14	Gallery Records - Stephen Radich Gallery Sales and Payment Reports, 1959-1963

Box 3, Folder 15	Japanese Art Inventory Dimensions and Framing Receipts, circa 1985-1990
Box 3, Folder 16	Museum of Modern Art Loan Agreements and Receipts, 1962-1964, 1969
Box 3, Folder 17	Personal Expenses and Receipts (Miscellaneous), 1980-1991 Notes: This folder contains miscellaneous bills and receipts for utilities, groceries, pizza deliveries, car repairs, etc.
Box 3, Folder 18	Sales, Consignment and Loan Records, 1962-1990
Box 3, Folder 19	Storage and Shipping Records, 1964-1991
Box 3, Folder 20	Travel Expense Receipts and Boarding Passes, 1980, 1989-1990 Notes: This folder mostly consists of plane tickets, travel brochures, and a few hotel receipts.

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Series 5: Printed Material, 1961-1998

0.8 Linear feet (Box 3, OVs 4-7)

Scope and Contents: Printed Material includes a posthumous retrospective catalog, exhibition announcements, invitations and catalogs, magazines, posters, clippings in English and Japanese, and other miscellaneous materials.

Arrangement: Printed materials about Matsumi Kanemitsu or that mention him are grouped together at the beginning of the series, followed by printed materials about other artists and subjects.

Available Formats: The bulk of the materials in this series have been digitized, except for duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have only had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages digitized.

Box 3, Folder 21	Clippings about Matsumi Kanemitsu, 1959-1994
Oversize 4, Folder 1	Clippings about Matsumi Kanemitsu (Oversized), 1985-1993
Box 3, Folder 22	Clippings about Matsumi Kanemitsu, circa 1965-1990 Notes: Clippings written in Japanese.
Oversize 5, Folder 1	Clippings about Matsumi Kanemitsu (Oversized), 1963-1964, 1988 Notes: Clippings written in Japanese.
Box 3, Folder 23	Exhibition Announcements on Matsumi Kanemitsu, 1967-1993
Box 3, Folder 24	Exhibition Catalogues on Matsumi Kanemitsu, 1963-1967
Box 3, Folder 25	Exhibition Catalogues on Matsumi Kanemitsu, 1971-1978
Box 3, Folder 26	Exhibition Catalogues on Matsumi Kanemitsu, 1984-1989
Box 3, Folder 27	Exhibition Catalogues on Matsumi Kanemitsu, 1990-1993
Box 3, Folder 28	Exhibition Catalogue on Matsumi Kanemitsu - Kanemitsu, Matsumi: 1950-1990, 1998
Oversize 6, Folder 1	Exhibition Posters on Matsumi Kanemitsu (Oversized), 1961, 1998
Box 3, Folder 29	Other Artists - Exhibition Announcements, circa 1965-1979
Box 3, Folder 30	Other Artists - Exhibition Announcements, 1980-1991
Box 3, Folder 31	Other Artists - Exhibition Catalogues, 1967-1970
Box 3, Folder 32	Other Artists - Exhibition Catalogues, 1971-1991
Oversize 6, Folder 2	Other Artists - Exhibition Posters (Oversized), 1960-1970

Box 3, Folder 33 [Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1964-1992](#)

Oversize 7, Folder 1 [Miscellaneous Printed Material \(Oversized\), 1965, 1990](#)

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Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1960-1992

0.2 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Photographic material primarily consists of photographs of Kanemitsu, his children and friends. Also found are a few photographs of artwork, miscellaneous photographs of a winter landscape, a house and street in Japan, and two slides of artwork titled *Phil*.

Arrangement: Photographic materials related to Kanemitsu and his friends and family come first, followed by images of his artwork, and lastly images of travel.

Available Formats: The bulk of the materials in this series have been digitized, except for duplicates and blank versos of photographs.

Box 3, Folder 34 [Photographs of Matsumi Kanemitsu, Family and Friends, circa 1971-1990](#)

Box 3, Folder 35 [Photographs of Artwork, circa 1980-1984](#)

Box 3, Folder 36 [Slides of Artwork Titled Phil, circa 1960-1992](#)

Box 3, Folder 37 [Photographs of Travel and Unidentified Locations, circa 1980](#)

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