



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the James Magee Papers, circa 1970-2019, in the Archives of American Art

Ricky Gomez

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	James Magee papers
Date:	circa 1970-2019
Identifier:	AAA.magejame
Creator:	Magee, James R.
Extent:	5.8 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of James Magee measure 5.8 linear feet and date from circa 1970 to 2019. The papers document Magee's career as a sculptor through correspondence with friends, colleagues, and art institutions; literary writings associated with certain pieces of sculpture; interviews, video footage of studio and works, audio of literary text written to accompany sculpture pieces, and other recordings; catalogs, book of literary text to accompany sculpture pieces, books on Magee, and other printed material; sketches and numerous sketchbooks; and photographs and negatives of specific sculpture pieces.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated in 2016 and 2019 by James Magee.

Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with James Magee conducted by Jason Stieber, September 29-30, 2016.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Ricky Gomez in 2021.

Preferred Citation

James Magee papers, circa 1970-2019. 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. Researchers interested in accessing born-digital records or audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact References Services for more information.

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Biographical / Historical

James Magee (1946-) is a sculptor and painter in El Paso, Texas. He is known for his work "The Hill", a monumental work of art on a 2,000 acre tract of desert land outside of El Paso, Texas that Magee has been continuously working on since the 1980s.

Scope and Contents

The papers of James Magee measure 5.8 linear feet and date from circa 1970 to 2019. The papers document Magee's career as a sculptor through correspondence with friends, colleagues, and art institutions; literary writings associated with certain pieces of sculpture; interviews, video footage of studio and works, audio of literary text written to accompany sculpture pieces, and other recordings; catalogs, book of literary text to accompany sculpture pieces, books on Magee, and other printed material; sketches and numerous sketchbooks; and photographs and negatives of specific sculpture pieces.

Correspondence includes letters from friends and colleagues and letters praising Magee for his "Hill" project outside El Paso, Texas. Writings are primarily literary text (poems) inspired by Magee's pieces of sculpture that Magee had published.

Recordings consist of one video cassette on Magee's "Hill" project, audio cassette interviews for an article published in Mexico, audio cassettes and one audio reel of what appears to be poems inspired by sculpture pieces, and CD's containing audio and some documentation related to his exhibitions.

Printed material consists of a book of poems inspired by sculpture pieces that Magee had published, a book written on the life and art of Magee, catalogs, and a book of Goya letters that Magee compiled and edited. Also included with the book of Goya letters is a digital audio version of the book.

Artwork consists of sketches and numerous sketchbooks belonging to Magee. Sketchbooks contain a mix of watercolor paintings, pencil sketches, and ink sketches. Photographic material is primarily photographs and some negatives and contact sheets of some of Magee's works.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into six series.

- Series 1: Correspondence, 1989-2018 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 2: Writings, 1985-2009 (0.6 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 3: Sound and Video Recordings, 1972-2012 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 4: Printed Material, 1993-2019 (0.2 linear feet; Box 2)
 - Series 5: Artwork, circa 1970-2005 (4.0 linear feet; Boxes 2-9, OV 10-12)
 - Series 6: Photographic Material, 1972-2008 (0.6 linear feet, Box 4)
-

Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:

- Drawings
- Interviews
- Sketchbooks
- Sound recordings
- Video recordings

Occupations:

- Sculptors -- Texas

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence, 1989-2018

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence includes letters from friends and colleagues and letters praising Magee for his "Hill" project outside El Paso, Texas.

Box 1, Folder 1-2	Correspondence, undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1989, 1992
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence, 1994-1996
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence, 1997-1999
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence, 2000-2004
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence, 2005-2007
Box 1, Folder 8	Correspondence, 2008-2010
Box 1, Folder 9	Correspondence, 2011-2018
Box 1, Folder 10	Hill Project, 2001

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Series 2: Writings, 1985-2009

0.6 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Writings are primarily literary text (poems) inspired by Magee's pieces of sculpture that Magee had published.

Box 1, Folder 11-21 Draft of Titles for "Selected Titles to Specific Works..." Book, 1985-2000

Box 1, Folder 22 Roman Emperor Valens, circa 2009

Box 1, Folder 23 Miscellaneous, 2004

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Series 3: Sound and Video Recordings, 1972-2012

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Recordings consist of one videocassette on Magee's Hill project, audio cassette interviews for an article published in Mexico, audio cassettes and one audio reel of what appears to be poems inspired by sculpture pieces, and CD's containing audio and some documents related to his exhibitions.

Box 1, Folder 24, Item 1	"Selected Titles to Specific Works of Sculpture by James R. Magee 1985-2000", 2000 1 Sound discs (CD)
Box 1, Folder 24, Item 2	"Catullus", 2004 1 Sound discs (CD) Notes: Poems by Roman poet, Catullus translated to English by Paul Schmidt and recited by James Magee.
Box 1, Folder 25	"Hill Maintenance", 2000 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
Box 1, Folder 26, Item 1-2	Interviews for "Reforma" Article, Mexico City, circa 1980 2 Sound cassettes
Box 1, Folder 26, Item 3	"Mine Shaft", undated 1 Sound cassette Notes: May be audio of text (poems) Magee wrote to correspond with certain sculpture pieces.
Box 1, Folder 26, Item 4	"Bad", undated 1 Sound cassette Notes: May be audio of text (poems) Magee wrote to correspond with certain sculpture pieces.
Box 1, Folder 27	"Military Trans", undated 4 Sound cassettes Notes: May be audio of text (poems) Magee wrote to correspond with certain sculpture pieces.
Box 1, Folder 28, Item 1	Untitled Sound Reel, 1972-1973 1 Sound tape reel Notes: May be audio of text (poems) Magee wrote to correspond with certain sculpture pieces.
Box 1, Folder 28, Item 2-3	Untitled Cassettes, undated 2 Sound cassettes Notes: May be audio of text (poems) Magee wrote to correspond with certain sculpture pieces.
Box 1, Folder 29	Miscellaneous Digital Recordings, 2008-2012

4 Electronic discs (CD)

Notes: CDs contain audio and documents related to some of Magee's works and the works of some of his colleagues.

"Horace Mayfield Inventory, 2012"

"Cornudas Foundation Copywork 7/30/08"

"Magee Garden"

"Nasher Addendum"

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Series 4: Printed Material, 1993-2019

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Printed material consists of a book of poems inspired by sculpture pieces that Magee had published, a book written on the life and art of Magee, catalogs, and a book of Goya letters that Magee compiled and edited. Also included with the book of Goya letters is a digital audio version of the book.

Box 2, Folder 1	Annabel Livermore Catalogs, 1997, 2018-2019
Box 2, Folder 2	"The Fashioning of Identity in the Art of James Magee: Sculptor, Poet, Painter, Architect" by Margaret Dianne Adams, 2011, 2019
Box 2, Folder 3	"Letters to Goya" Edited by James Magee, 2010, 2019 Notes: Included is one micro SD card containing an audio version of the book.
Box 2, Folder 4	"My Letter to Robert" by James Magee, 1993, 1995
Box 2, Folder 5	"Selected Titles to Specific Works of Sculpture by James R. Magee 1985-2000", 2000
Box 2, Folder 6	Miscellaneous, circa 2006

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Series 5: Artwork, circa 1970-2005

4 Linear feet (Boxes 2-9, OV 10-12)

Scope and Contents: Artwork consists of sketches and numerous sketchbooks belonging to Magee. Sketchbooks contain a mix of carbon sketches, watercolor paintings, pencil sketches, and ink sketches.

Box 2, Folder 7	Annabel Livermore Sketches, 1982
Box 2, Folder 8-10	Pocket Sketchbooks, circa 1975-1999
Oversize 11	Sketches, undated
Box 2, Folder 11-16	Sketchbooks, circa 1975-1990
Box 3, Folder 1-11	Sketchbooks, circa 1980-2000
Box 4, Folder 1-6	Sketchbooks, circa 1980-1995
Box 5, Folder 1-4	Sketchbooks, circa 1980-2005
Box 6, Folder 1-3	Sketchbooks, circa 1970-1995
Box 7, Folder 1-3	Sketchbooks, circa 1980
Box 8, Folder 1-4	Sketchbooks, circa 1990-2005
Box 9, Folder 1-5	Sketchbooks, circa 1970-1995
Oversize 10, Item 1-2	Sketchbooks, undated
Oversize 12	Sketchbook, circa 1980

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Series 6: Photographic Material, 1972-2008

0.6 Linear feet (Box 4)

Scope and Contents: Photographic material is primarily photographs, negatives, and contact sheets of Magee's works of art.

Box 4, Folder 7	Candles, 1988
Box 4, Folder 8	"Chains", 1973-1975
Box 4, Folder 9	"Crucifix", 1972
Box 4, Folder 10	Early Studio Piece, 1972
Box 4, Folder 11	"Fire on the River", 1980
Box 4, Folder 12	Floor Piece, 1977-1979
Box 4, Folder 13	Horace Mayfield, circa 1990
Box 4, Folder 14	Magee's Studio, undated
Box 4, Folder 15	"New York Floor", undated
Box 4, Folder 16	"Ozzie & Harriet", 1977-1979
Box 4, Folder 17	"Pieta", 1975-1979
Box 4, Folder 18	"The Plumber's Wife", 1973-1975
Box 4, Folder 19	"The Rapture", 1979
Box 4, Folder 20	San Antonio Piece, 1980-1981
Box 4, Folder 21	Stainless Welded Hands, 1974
Box 4, Folder 22	Transformation Set, Eastman School of Music, 1977
Box 4, Folder 23	Untitled Piece, 1972-1973
Box 4, Folder 24-25	Works in Progress, circa 1980-1995
Box 4, Folder 26	Contact Sheets, undated
Box 4, Folder 27	Negatives, undated

Box 4, Folder 28

Miscellaneous, 1998-2008

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