



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Flora Whitney
Miller papers regarding Kay Sage,
1915-1982, in the Archives of American Art

Erin Corley

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection
was provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

December 18, 2006

Archives of American Art
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Flora Whitney Miller papers regarding Kay Sage
Identifier:	AAA.millflor
Date:	1915-1982
Extent:	0.2 Linear feet
Creator:	Miller, Flora Whitney
Language:	English .
Summary:	This small collection of papers (168 items) of socialite, art collector and patron Flora Whitney Miller document Miller's life-long friendship with surrealist artist Kay Sage measure 0.2 linear feet and date from 1915 to circa 1982. Found within the papers are 79 letters written to Miller by Sage; four letters written to Miller after Sage's suicide about Sage, and one reply letter; typescripts of 63 poems written by Sage, one handwritten poem by Sage, two Sage exhibition catalogs, and 18 snapshot photographs of Sage, Miller, and their friends. Documentation of Miller's career is not found within the papers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Flora Whitney Miller papers regarding Kay Sage were donated by Miller's daughter, Flora Miller Biddle, in 1990.

Related Material

Also available at the Archives of American Art are the Kay Sage papers, which have been digitized and are available via the Archives of American Art's website, as well as *China Eggs*, Kay Sage's unpublished memoirs covering the period circa 1910 to 1935, available on microfilm reel 685. The Archives also holds the papers of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Miller's mother, which provide information about Miller's role in the founding and running of the Whitney Museum of Art.

Alternative Forms Available

The papers of **Flora Whitney Miller** regarding Kay Sage in the Archives of American Art were digitized in 2007, and total 421 images.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Erin Corley in 2006. The collection was fully digitized in 2007 as part of the Terra Foundation for American Art Digitization Grant.

Preferred Citation

Flora Whitney Miller papers regarding Kay Sage, 1915-1982. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

The collection has been digitized and is available online via AAA's website.

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Biographical Note

Flora Whitney Miller (1897-1986) was born into two prominent New York families as the daughter of Gertrude Vanderbilt and Harry Payne Whitney. She attended the Brearley School in New York and Foxcroft School in Middleburg, Virginia, where she met and became close life-long friends with the artist Kay Sage. In 1916 Flora made her debut and, shortly after became engaged to Quentin Roosevelt, son of President Theodore Roosevelt. Before they married, Quentin died tragically in 1918 when his plane was shot down in Germany. While attending Columbia University, she met Roderick Tower and married him in 1920. She gave birth to a daughter Pamela in 1921 and a son Whitney in 1923, and was divorced from Tower in France in 1925. In 1927 she married G. Macculloch Miller and had another two children, Flora in 1928 and Leverett in 1931.

Flora Whitney Miller grew up in New York and worked closely with her mother Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, meeting and befriending many artists, dealers, and art patrons. She helped her mother plan the founding of the Whitney Museum of Art and served on the museum's board, serving as President after her mother's death in 1941 until 1966, and as Chairman from 1966 through 1974. Miller died on July 18, 1986.

Scope and Content Note

This small collection of papers (168 items) of socialite, art collector and patron Flora Whitney Miller document Miller's life-long friendship with surrealist artist Kay Sage measure 0.2 linear feet and date from 1915 to circa 1982. Found within the papers are 79 letters written to Miller from Sage; four letters written to Miller about Sage after Sage's suicide, and one reply letter; typescripts of 63 poems written by Sage; one handwritten poem by Sage; two Sage exhibition catalogs; and 18 snapshot photographs of Sage, Miller, and their friends. Documentation of Miller's career is not found within the papers.

Arrangement

Due to the small size of this collection, the collection has been arranged as one series.

- Series 1: Flora Whitney Papers Regarding Kay Sage, 1915-1982 (Box 1; 9 folders)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Poetry
Surrealism
Women painters

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Sage, Kay

Container Listing

Series 1: Flora Whitney Miller papers regarding Kay Sage, 1915-1982

9 Folders (Box 1)

This collection includes 79 letters written by artist Kay Sage to Flora Whitney Miller documenting their life-long friendship. The letters discuss mutual friends and family, Sage's residence in Italy and her various travels, her marriage to Prince Ranieri di San Faustino, her studies and work, returning to the U.S. at the beginning of World War II, her first American exhibition, and her various thoughts on life, including the importance of this friendship. One additional letter written to Miller by James Soby and Miller's reply concern Sage's bequest to the Museum of Modern Art. Three letters from art historian Stephen R. Miller concern her research on Kay Sage. There are typescripts of 63 poems written by Sage and one handwritten poem, "To Quentin Roosevelt" written by Sage to Flora after the death of Flora's fiancé, Quentin Roosevelt. Also found are 18 snapshot photographs of Sage and unidentified friends, and two catalogs for Kay Sage art exhibitions.

Box 1, Folder 1	Kay Sage Letters to Flora Whitney Miller, Undated Letters, circa 1917-1940 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 2	Kay Sage Letters to Flora Whitney Miller, 1915, 1917 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 3	Kay Sage Letters to Flora Whitney Miller, 1918 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 4	Kay Sage Letters to Flora Whitney Miller, 1919 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 5	Kay Sage Letters to Flora Whitney Miller, 1920-1940 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence regarding Kay Sage, 1965-1982 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 7	Poetry by Kay Sage (63 typescripts and one hand-written manuscript), 1919-1926 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 8	Kay Sage Exhibition Catalogs, 1965, 1977 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 9	Photographs, circa 1920 Image(s)

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