



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Kenjilo Nanao
papers, circa 1885-1887, circa 1949-2017,
in the Archives of American Art

Ryan Evans

2019 April 2

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Kenjilo Nanao papers
Identifier:	AAA.nanakenj
Date:	circa 1885-1887 circa 1949-2017
Extent:	11.3 Linear feet 0.706 Gigabytes
Creator:	Nanao, Kenjirō, 1929-2013
Language:	Multiple languages Collection is in English and Japanese.
Summary:	<p>The Kenjilo Nanao papers measure 11.3 linear feet and date from circa 1885-1887 and circa 1949-2017, with the bulk of the papers dating from 1970 to 2000. Biographical material includes forms of international identification, travel documents, early academic writing on art, and interviews in the form of written typescripts and digital audio recordings. Correspondence is mostly personal between friends and family, in addition to a few folders of professional correspondence spanning Nanao's career. Correspondence drafts also appear as entries in bound journals. The Journals series includes bound journals of mixed content such as thoughts on art, to-do lists, and artwork in various media including watercolors and charcoal. Professional files include various professional portfolios that Nanao produced for the purpose of tenure review, a binder detailing relationships with various galleries, and various teaching materials and studio documents. Printed materials include exhibition catalogs, invitations, and clippings. Photographs are primarily of family and friends, with some images of artwork and exhibitions. Artwork includes sketchbooks, as well as some loose drawings and watercolors.</p>

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Kenjilo Nanao papers were donated to the Archives of American Art in 2016 and 2018 by Gail Nanao, Kenjilo Nanao's widow.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Ryan Evans in 2019.

Preferred Citation

Kenjilo Nanao papers, circa 1885-1887, circa 1949-2017. 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.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Painter and printmaker Kenjilo Nanao (1929-2013), was born in Aomori, Japan, and graduated with a degree in economics in 1953 from Nihon University before immigrating to the United States to study art in the San Francisco Bay Area. He received a bachelor's degree from the California School of Fine Arts in 1963 as well as a masters of fine arts from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1971, where he studied under Nathan Oliveira and met his wife and fellow artist, Gail Chadell Nanao.

Kenjilo's primary artistic medium was lithography in which he became known for Surrealist minimal figurative compositions. Eventually he immersed himself in painting in an Abstract Expressionist style that became his main form of artistic production from the 1980s on. Nanao taught lithography and painting at California State University at Hayward from 1971-1990, and lectured at various other schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. His work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, in New York City, City of San Francisco, Pasadena Art Museum, Los Angeles County Museum, Cincinnati Museum of Art, Honolulu Academy of Art, Gruenwald (University of California, Los Angeles), the Achenbach Foundation, and others.

Kenjilo Nanao died in Berkeley, CA in 2013 and is survived by his wife and son Max.

Scope and Contents

The Kenjilo Nanao papers measure 11.3 linear feet and date from circa 1885-1887 and circa 1949-2017, with the bulk of the papers dating from 1970 to 2000. Biographical material includes forms of international identification, travel documents, early academic writing on art, and interviews in the form of written typescripts and digital audio recordings. Correspondence is mostly personal between friends and family, in addition to a few folders of professional correspondence spanning Nanao's career. Correspondence drafts also appear as entries in bound journals. The Journals series includes bound journals of mixed

content such as thoughts on art, to-do lists, and artwork in various media including watercolors and charcoal. Professional files include various professional portfolios that Nanao produced for the purpose of tenure review, a binder detailing relationships with various galleries, and various teaching materials and studio documents. Printed materials include exhibition catalogs, invitations, and clippings. Photographs are primarily of family and friends, with some images of artwork and exhibitions. Artwork includes sketchbooks, as well as some loose drawings and watercolors.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in 7 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1960-circa 2017 (0.3 Linear Feet, .706 GB; Box 1, ER01)
- Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1951-2013 (4.9 Linear Feet; Boxes 1-6)
- Series 3: Journals, circa 1949-2013 (3.9 Linear Feet; Boxes 6-9, 12)
- Series 4: Professional Files, circa 1967-2011 (1.0 Linear Feet; Box 10)
- Series 5: Printed Material, circa 1885-1887, circa 1960-2010 (0.6 Linear Feet; Box 11)
- Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1960-2011 (0.1 Linear Feet; Box 11)
- Series 7: Artwork, circa 1976-2010 (0.4 Linear Feet; Boxes 11-12)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Japanese Americans

Types of Materials:

Sketchbooks

Occupations:

Educators -- California

Lithographers -- California

Painters -- California -- San Francisco Bay Area

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1960-circa 2017

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

0.706 Gigabytes (ER01)

Biographical materials include forms of international identification, travel documents, early academic writing on art, and interviews in both written typescript form and digital audio recording.

Box 1, Folder 1	Artist Statements, circa 1970-1990
Box 1, Folder 2	Business Card, circa 1980s
Box 1, Folder 3	Curriculum Vitae, circa 1972-1973
Box 1, Folder 4	Degrees, Certifications, circa 1970, 2000
Box 1, Folder 5	Essays, Art Historical, circa 1960s
	Identification
Box 1, Folder 6	International Driving Permit, 1981
Box 1, Folder 7	Paris Cartes Oranges, Nanao Family, circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 8	Paris Studio Membership, Access Cards, circa 1960s
Box 1, Folder 9	Transportation Identification, Gail and Kenjilo in Bern, Switzerland, circa 2003-2008
Box 1, Folder 10	Miscellaneous Identification, Wallet Contents, circa 1977
Box 1, Folder 11	Interview Transcript, Gail Chadell Nanao by Susan Landauer (Nov. 2017), circa 2017
Box 1, Folder 12	Interview with Beate Kropidlowksi (Jan. 23, 2005), circa 2005 <i>Includes born-digital records, see ER01</i>
Folder ER01	Interview with Beate Kropidlowksi (Jan. 23, 2005), Digital Audio Recording, 2005 <i>0.706 Gigabytes (One computer file)</i>
Box 1, Folder 13	Newsletter, Fishing Trip (Japanese), circa 1985

Box 1, Folder 14	Notes, circa 1970s-2010
Box 1, Folder 15	Party Flyers, circa 1990s
Box 1, Folder 16	Travel Documents, Miscellaneous, circa 1970s-2000
Box 1, Folder 17	Who's Who, circa 1995-2000
Box 1, Folder 18	Work Visa, circa 1965
Box 1, Folder 19	Unidentified Bound Booklet (Japanese, Hand-written), circa 1983

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Series 2: Correspondence , circa 1951-2013

4.9 Linear feet (Boxes 1-6)

Correspondence is mostly personal in nature, between friends and family in both English and Japanese, with the exception of a few folders of professional correspondence spanning Nanao's career. Correspondence drafts also appear as entries in bound journals.

Box 1, Folder 20-26	Address Books, circa 1960s-1990s
Box 1, Folder 27	Business Cards, circa 1970s-1990s
	Correspondence Journals
Box 1, Folder 28	Untitled, circa 1951-1952
Box 1, Folder 29	Letters 1965-1975, circa 1965-1975
Box 1, Folder 30	Untitled , circa 1970s
Box 1, Folder 31	Untitled , circa 1977
Box 1, Folder 32	Untitled, circa 1977-1982
Box 1, Folder 33	Letters 1975-, circa 1975-1977
Box 1, Folder 34	Untitled, circa 1977-1978
Box 1, Folder 35	Untitled, circa 1989-1992
Box 1, Folder 36	Untitled, circa 1989-1993
Box 1, Folder 37	Untitled, circa 1994-1995
Box 1, Folder 38	Letters 1995, circa 1995-1996
Box 2, Folder 1	Letters 1996, circa 1996-2006
Box 2, Folder 2-3	Professional Correspondence, circa 1968-2011
Box 2, Folder 4	Correspondence, circa 1960
Box 2, Folder 5	Correspondence, circa 1961
Box 2, Folder 6	Correspondence, circa 1962

Box 2, Folder 7	Correspondence, circa 1963
Box 2, Folder 8	Correspondence, circa 1964
Box 2, Folder 9	Correspondence, circa 1965
Box 2, Folder 10	Correspondence, circa 1966
Box 2, Folder 11	Correspondence, circa 1967
Box 2, Folder 12	Correspondence, circa 1968
Box 2, Folder 13	Correspondence, circa 1969
Box 2, Folder 14	Correspondence, circa 1970
Box 2, Folder 15	Correspondence, circa 1971
Box 2, Folder 16	Correspondence, circa 1972
Box 2, Folder 17	Correspondence, circa 1973
Box 2, Folder 18	Correspondence, circa 1974
Box 2, Folder 19	Correspondence, circa 1975
Box 2, Folder 20	Correspondence, circa 1976
Box 2, Folder 21	Correspondence, circa 1977
Box 2, Folder 22	Correspondence, circa 1978
Box 2, Folder 23	Correspondence, circa 1979
Box 2, Folder 24-25	Correspondence, circa 1980
Box 2, Folder 26	Correspondence, circa 1981
Box 2, Folder 27-28	Correspondence, circa 1982
Box 2, Folder 29	Correspondence, circa 1983

Box 3, Folder 1	Correspondence, circa 1983
Box 3, Folder 2	Correspondence, circa 1984
Box 3, Folder 3	Correspondence, circa 1985
Box 3, Folder 4	Correspondence, circa 1986
Box 3, Folder 5	Correspondence, circa 1987
Box 3, Folder 6-7	Correspondence, circa 1988
Box 3, Folder 8	Correspondence, circa 1989
Box 3, Folder 9-11	Correspondence, circa 1990
Box 3, Folder 12-13	Correspondence, circa 1991
Box 3, Folder 14-15	Correspondence, circa 1992
Box 3, Folder 16	Correspondence, circa 1993
Box 4, Folder 1-2	Correspondence, circa 1994
Box 4, Folder 3-4	Correspondence, circa 1995
Box 4, Folder 5-6	Correspondence, circa 1996
Box 4, Folder 7-8	Correspondence, circa 1997
Box 4, Folder 9-10	Correspondence, circa 1998
Box 4, Folder 11	Correspondence, circa 1999
Box 4, Folder 12	Correspondence, circa 2000
Box 4, Folder 13	Correspondence, circa 2001
Box 4, Folder 14	Correspondence, circa 2002
Box 4, Folder 15	Correspondence, circa 2003
Box 5, Folder 1	Correspondence, circa 2004

Box 5, Folder 2-3	Correspondence, circa 2005
Box 5, Folder 4-5	Correspondence, circa 2006
Box 5, Folder 6-7	Correspondence, circa 2007
Box 5, Folder 8	Correspondence, circa 2008
Box 5, Folder 9	Correspondence, circa 2009
Box 5, Folder 10	Correspondence, circa 2010
Box 5, Folder 11	Correspondence, circa 2011
Box 5, Folder 12	Correspondence, circa 2012
Box 5, Folder 13	Correspondence, circa 2013
Box 5, Folder 14	Unknown Correspondents, Undated, circa 1970s-2000
Box 5, Folder 15	Letter Drafts, Japanese, circa 1982-1989
Box 6, Folder 1-2	Letter Drafts, Japanese, circa 1982-1989

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Series 3: Journals, circa 1949-2013

4 Linear feet (Boxes 6-9, 12)

The journal series includes bound journals of mixed content, including thoughts on art, to-do lists, and artwork in various media including watercolors and charcoal. Later journals, often bound in leather, are titled and dedicated to specific travels and often documents those trips as well as long periods afterwards.

Journals are arranged roughly in chronological order.

Box 6, Folder 3	Untitled , circa 1949
Box 6, Folder 4	Untitled , circa 1952-1955
Box 6, Folder 5	Untitled , circa 1960s
Box 6, Folder 6	Untitled , circa 1964-1965
Box 6, Folder 7	Untitled , circa 1966-1968
Box 6, Folder 8	Untitled , circa 1969-1970
Box 6, Folder 9	Untitled , circa 1971-1975
Box 6, Folder 10	Untitled , circa 1971-1977
Box 6, Folder 11	Untitled , circa 1972-1976
Box 6, Folder 12	Untitled , circa 1973-1979
Box 6, Folder 13	Untitled , circa 1976-1982
Box 6, Folder 14	Untitled , circa 1977-1982
Box 6, Folder 15	Untitled , circa 1978-1982
Box 7, Folder 1	Untitled, circa 1980-1982
Box 7, Folder 2	Untitled, circa 1982-1984
Box 7, Folder 3	Untitled, circa 1983-1988
Box 7, Folder 4	Alta, Sierra Nevada Foothills, circa 1984-1987
Box 7, Folder 5	Untitled, circa 1985-1995

Box 12, Folder 1	Life and Times at Alta, circa 1985-1995
Box 7, Folder 6	Trip to Japan, 1986, circa 1986-1987
Box 7, Folder 7	Washington, DC, 1987, circa 1987-1988
Box 7, Folder 8	Alta II, 1987, circa 1987-1994
Box 7, Folder 9	Untitled, circa 1987-1995
Box 7, Folder 10	Trip to Mexico, 1988, circa 1988-1992
Box 7, Folder 11	Untitled, circa 1988-1990
Box 7, Folder 12	Untitled, circa 1992
Box 8, Folder 1	Rome, Spring 1993, circa 1993
Box 8, Folder 2	Turkey, 1994, circa 1994
Box 8, Folder 3	Japan, 1994, circa 1994-1996
Box 8, Folder 4	Studio Notes, circa 1992-1997
Box 8, Folder 5	Norway, 1996, circa 1996-1997
Box 8, Folder 6	Untitled, circa 1996-1998
Box 8, Folder 7	Spain, 1997, circa 1997-1998
Box 8, Folder 8	Venice, 1998, circa 1998-1999
Box 8, Folder 9	Tassajara, 1998, circa 1998-2001
Box 8, Folder 10	Studio Notes, circa 1998-2003
Box 8, Folder 11	Japan, 1999, circa 1999-2000
Box 8, Folder 12	Untitled, circa 2000-2001
Box 9, Folder 1	Paris, Madrid, 2001, circa 2001-2002

Box 9, Folder 2	Untitled, circa 2002-2004
Box 9, Folder 3	Studio Notes, circa 2002-2011
Box 9, Folder 4	Switzerland, 2003, circa 2003-2004
Box 9, Folder 5	Studio Notes, 2003, circa 2003-2004
Box 9, Folder 6	Untitled, Loose Journal Entries, circa 2004
Box 9, Folder 7	Japan, Aomori Kyodokan, circa 2004-2006
Box 9, Folder 8	Untitled, circa 2005
Box 9, Folder 9	Studio Notes, circa 2005-2006
Box 9, Folder 10	Untitled, Japanese, circa 2006
Box 9, Folder 11	Paris, Lyon, Chateau de la Caze, circa 2007-2008
Box 9, Folder 12	Our Trip to France, circa 2007-2010
Box 9, Folder 13	Japan, Honolulu, 2008, circa 2008-2009
Box 9, Folder 14	Untitled (Gail Nanao, Morocco), circa 2009
Box 9, Folder 15	Untitled, circa 2009-2011
Box 9, Folder 16	Untitled (Gail Nanao, Hospital), circa 2012-2013

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Series 4: Professional Files, circa 1967-2011

1 Linear foot (Box 10)

Professional files include various professional portfolios that Nanao produced for the purpose of tenure review, a binder detailing relationships with various galleries, and various teaching materials and studio documents.

Box 10, Folder 1	Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo (Nov. 1976-Jan. 1977), circa 1976-1977
Box 10, Folder 2	Consignment and Shipping Bills, circa 1990-2009
Box 10, Folder 3	Cranbrook Academy of Art, circa 1981
Box 10, Folder 4	Expense Ledger, circa 1967-1969
Box 10, Folder 5	First Artists' Soap Derby, SFMoMA (May 1975), circa 1975
Box 10, Folder 6	Galleries' Records, circa 1975-1980 Gallery documents in this binder are organized according to gallery and include the following galleries: Associated American Artists, Smith Andersen, The Print Cabinet, Santa Barbara Contemporary Graphics Center, Van Straaten Gallery, Dana Reich Gallery, Dubins Gallery, Marjorie Kauffmann Graphics, The Fountain Gallery of Art, Huntly Gallery, The Graphics Gallery, and John Carr, among others.
Box 10, Folder 7	Japan Trip, 1979, circa 1979
Box 10, Folder 8	Lithography Teaching Materials, circa 1970s
Box 10, Folder 9	Lithography Course, circa 1972-1990
Box 10, Folder 10	Planner 1977, circa 1977
Box 10, Folder 11	Planner 1978, circa 1978
Box 10, Folder 12	Planner , circa 2003
Box 10, Folder 13	Post Tenure Review Instructional Performance Portfolio, circa 1984
Box 10, Folder 14-16	Promotion Application to Professor Portfolio, circa 1980
Box 10, Folder 17	Publication Mechanical for <i>Kenjilo Nanao: Pacific Paintings</i> , circa 2011
Box 10, Folder 18	Slides and Artwork Shipment Ledger, 1973

Box 10, Folder 19	Slides and Artwork Shipment Ledger, circa 1979-1981
Box 10, Folder 20	Slides and Artwork Shipment Ledger, circa 1988-1992
Box 10, Folder 21	Slides and Artwork Shipment Ledger, circa 1997-2003
Box 10, Folder 22	Santa Barbara Museum Contemporary Graphics Center, circa 1975-1977
Box 10, Folder 23	Smith Andersen Gallery, circa 1973-1990
Box 10, Folder 24	Studio Documents, Miscellaneous, circa 1967-2002

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Series 5: Printed Material , circa 1885-1887, circa 1960-2010

0.6 Linear feet (Box 11)

Printed material includes exhibition catalogs and invitations, as well as clipping and Japanese language materials.

Box 11, Folder 1	Clippings, circa 1970-2010
Box 11, Folder 2-4	Exhibition Catalogs, circa 1960-1990
Box 11, Folder 5-7	Exhibition Invitations, circa 1970-2010
Box 11, Folder 8	<i>Gallery Guide West Coast</i> , 2001
Box 11, Folder 9	<i>Illustrated Guidebook for Travelers Round the World, America</i> , circa 1885-1887
Box 11, Folder 10	Japanese Paperbacks, circa 1990-2010
Box 11, Folder 11-12	Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1970-2007

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Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1960-2011

0.1 Linear feet (Box 11)

Photographic material is primarily comprised of images of family and friends, with some images of artwork and exhibitions.

Box 11, Folder 13	Gail and Kenjilo Nano , circa 1960, 1997
Box 11, Folder 14	Friends, Family in Japan, circa 2000
Box 11, Folder 15	Nano Family in Japan, circa 1960-1979
Box 11, Folder 16	Kenjilo Nano Artwork, Installation , circa 1975-2011

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Series 7: Artwork, circa 1976-2010

0.4 Linear feet (Boxes 11-12)

The artwork series includes a number of sketchbooks, as well as some loose drawings and watercolors.

Box 11, Folder 17	Sketchbook, circa 1976
Box 11, Folder 18	Sketchbook, circa 1988
Box 11, Folder 19	Sketchbook, circa 2009
Box 11, Folder 20	Sketchbook, circa 2009
Box 11, Folder 21	Sketchbook, circa 2009
Box 11, Folder 22	Sketchbook, circa 2009
Box 11, Folder 23	Sketchbook, circa 2010
Box 12, Folder 2	Ink, Watercolor on Paper, circa 1980-2000

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