



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the The New Arts records, 1950-1979, in the Archives of American Art

Christopher DeMairo

The processing 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.

2022 October 14

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	The New Arts records
Date:	1950-1979
Identifier:	AAA.newarts
Creator:	New Arts (Art gallery)
Extent:	1.3 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The New Arts records measure 1.3 linear feet and date from 1950 to 1979. The collection sheds light on the gallery's operations through correspondence, exhibition files, printed material, artists' files, and more.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 1979 by gallery owner and director Kathryn Swenson.

Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Marc Moldawer, Kathryn Swenson, and Robert Wilson conducted by Sandra Curtis Levy, August 15, 1984.

Available Formats

Portions of the collection are available on 35mm microfilm reels 2242-2244 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

Portions of the collection are available on microfilm at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and through interlibrary loan.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Christopher DeMairo in 2022.

Preferred Citation

The New Arts records, 1950-1979. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center. Microfilmed materials must be consulted on microfilm. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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Biographical / Historical

The New Arts was founded in 1956 in Houston, Texas by Kathryn Swenson. The gallery was initially established to exhibit and sell pre-Columbian artwork, the bulk of which came from Andre Emmerich's private collection. Swenson asked friend and museum specialist Jermayne MacAgy to help with the exhibition display, and then sometime in the next two years, the gallery began to show established local artists. Pre-Columbian shows persisted throughout The New Arts' existence, but the gallery shifted its focus towards exhibiting a wide range of contemporary painters and sculptors by the late 1950s. Artists exhibited at The New Arts include Jack Boynton, Forest Bess, Hassel Smith, Max Ernst, Walter Kuhlman, Lawrence Calcagno, Joseph Cornell, Peter Plagens, and Jean Varda.

The New Arts closed in 1974.

Scope and Contents

The New Arts records measure 1.3 linear feet and date from 1950 to 1979. The collection sheds light on the gallery's operations through administrative records and artists' files. Administrative records include artwork authentication records, correspondence with museums, galleries, and private collectors, exhibition files, ephemera from exhibitions held elsewhere, and editions of the Contemporary Arts Council calendar. Artists' files consist of correspondence, price lists, photos of artwork and installations, exhibition ephemera, reviews, some resumes, and more. Artists covered include Forrest Bess, James Boynton, Lawrence Calcagno, Joseph Cornell, Max Ernst, Walter Kuhlman, Peter Plagens, Hassel Smith, Richard Steinberg, and Jean Varda.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as two series.

- Series 1: Administrative Records, 1952-1970 (Box 1; .4 linear feet)
 - Series 2: Artists' Files, 1950-1979 (Box 1-2, OV 3; .9 linear feet)
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Names and Subject Terms

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

Names:

Bess, Forrest, 1911-1977
Boynton, Jack, 1928-2010
Calcagno, Lawrence, 1913-
Cornell, Joseph

Emmerich, André
Ernst, Max, 1891-1976
Kuhlman, Walter
Plagens, Peter
Smith, Hassel, 1915-2007
Steinberg, Richard
Varda, Jean

Functions:

Art galleries, Commercial -- Texas

Container Listing

Series 1: Administrative Records, 1952-1970

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Records include artwork authentication correspondence and appraisals, exhibition files, ephemera from exhibitions held elsewhere, and editions of the Contemporary Arts Council calendar. Correspondence found in this series is with museums, galleries, and private collectors, some sales and consignment records are also present. Andre Emmerich's correspondence mostly concerns the exhibition, sale, and research of pre-Columbian art. Exhibition files include correspondence, price lists, photographs of paintings by Gill Oliver, shipping documents, and newspaper clippings. Contemporary Arts Association records consist of reports, correspondence, clippings, and other printed ephemera; and the Contemporary Arts Museum printed material includes exhibition catalogs, invitations, and an annual report. Also present is one photograph of Jermayne MacAgy, obituary clippings, and a tribute letter to MacAgy written by Dominique de Menil.

Box 1, Folder 1	Authentications, 1957-1968
Box 1, Folder 2	Contemporary Arts Association, 1952-1960
Box 1, Folder 3	Contemporary Arts Museum; Printed Material, 1953-1959
Box 1, Folder 4-5	Correspondence, Emmerich, Andre, 1956-1963
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence, Gallery Opening, 1956-1957
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence, General, 1959-1965
	Exhibitions
Box 1, Folder 8	Group Show (Dec. 15-Jan. 16), 1958-1959
Box 1, Folder 9	Delvaux Exhibition (1959); Staempfli Gallery, 1959-1960
Box 1, Folder 10	Piranesi Etchings, 1960
Box 1, Folder 11	Pre-Columbian Sculpture and Modern Painting (1962); Wonderland Town Hall, 1961-1962
Box 1, Folder 12	Surrealism-Fantasy (1966), 1966-1967
Box 1, Folder 13	A Review from Previous Shows and from the Gallery Collection (1967), 1967
Box 1, Folder 14	Exhibitions and Competitions, Mixed Papers, 1958-1963

Box 1, Folder 15 MacAgy, Jermayne, 1964

Printed Material

Box 1, Folder 17 Announcements and Catalogs from Exhibitions Held Elsewhere,
1950s-1960s

Box 1, Folder 18 Art Publications, 1953-1955, 1970

Box 1, Folder 19 Arts Council Calendar, 1956-1960

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Series 2: Artists' Files, 1950-1979

0.9 Linear feet (Box 1-2, OV 3)

Scope and Contents: Found here is correspondence, price lists, photos of artwork and installations, exhibition ephemera, reviews, and scant resumes. Sketches made by Hassell Smith and one print by Max Ernst are also present.

Box 1, Folder 20	Arrowsmith, Rex, 1961-1962
Box 1, Folder 21	Barnstone, Gertrude Levy, 1961-1963
Box 1, Folder 22	Boynton, James, 1955-1962
Box 1, Folder 23-24	Bess, Forrest, 1950-1974
Box 1, Folder 25	Calcagno, Lawrence, 1959-1962
Box 1, Folder 26	Charlton, Gene, 1957-1963
Box 1, Folder 27	Cornell, Joseph, 1957-1977
Box 1, Folder 28	Davis, Jerrold, 1960, undated
Box 1, Folder 29	Dudley, Don, 1957-1958, undated
Box 1, Folder 30	Ernst, Max, 1960-1963
Oversize 3	Ernst, Max, Print, undated
Box 1, Folder 31	Fils, Gimpel, 1959-1963
Box 1, Folder 32	Hayes, David, 1964-1969
Box 1, Folder 33	Johnson, Guy, 1958-1961
Box 1, Folder 34-35	Kuhlman, Walter, 1959-1966
Box 1, Folder 36	Love, Jim, 1964, undated
Box 1, Folder 37-38	Moldawer, Marc; Poetry, 1960-1963, undated
Box 1, Folder 39	Plagens, Peter, 1966-1973
Box 1, Folder 40	Ross, Howard, 1958-1962, 1967
Box 1, Folder 41	Simons, Vera, 1961-1963, 1979
Box 1, Folder 42	Smagula, Howard J., 1967

Box 2, Folder 1-2	Smith, Hassel; Printed Material, 1958-1974
Box 2, Folder 3	Steinberg, Richard, 1957-1960
Box 2, Folder 4	Stout, Richard, 1957-1960
Box 2, Folder 5	Temple, Latane, 1966-1968
Box 2, Folder 6	Varda, Jean, 1959-1960
Box 2, Folder 7	Williams, Charles, 1958

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