



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Salvatore Scarpitta Papers,  
1934-2012, in the Archives of American Art

Ricky Gomez

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Archives of American Art  
750 9th Street, NW  
Victor Building, Suite 2200  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Salvatore Scarpitta papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.scarsalv
<b>Date:</b>	1934-2011
<b>Extent:</b>	3.1 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Scarpitta, Salvatore, 1919-2007
<b>Language:</b>	Multiple languages  The collection is in English and Italian.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of sculptor, painter, and race car driver Salvatore Scarpitta measure 3.1 linear feet and date from 1934 to 2012. The papers include personal and professional letters from friends and galleries, exhibition and loan files, legal records pertaining to Scarpitta's estate, financial records, a scrapbook, photographs, printed material, and video recordings.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Salvatore Scarpitta papers were donated to the Archives of American Art in 2014 by Salvatore Scarpitta's daughter, Stella Cartaino.

### Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Salvatore Scarpitta conducted by Paul Cummings, January 31-February 3, 1975.

### Available Formats

All of the video recordings in the collection were digitized for research access and are available at Archives of American Art offices.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Ricky Gomez in 2019.

### Preferred Citation

Salvatore Scarpitta papers, 1934-2012. 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 audio visual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact References Services for more information.

## Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Salvatore Scarpitta (1919-2007) was a sculptor, painter, and race car driver in Los Angeles, California, and New York, New York. Scarpitta was born in New York and grew up in Los Angeles. He served in the United States Navy during World War II as a Monuments Man, and afterwards lived for a period of time in Rome. In 1958 he moved to New York and was represented by the Leo Castelli Gallery. At the Castelli Gallery, Scarpitta received 10 solo exhibitions and was involved in numerous group shows. His work included multimedia canvases, sleds, and sprint cars.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of sculptor, painter, and race car driver Salvatore Scarpitta measure 3.1 linear feet and date from 1934-2012. The papers include personal and professional letters from friends and galleries, exhibition and loan files, legal records pertaining to Scarpitta's estate, financial records, a scrapbook, photographs, printed material, and video recordings.

Financial and legal records include court documents related to Scarpitta's estate, loan agreements with various museums and galleries, expenses for various exhibitions, records for commission work, and appraisal documents. Correspondence, both personal and professional, are from friends, galleries and institutions. Printed materials include magazine and newsletter clippings related to Scarpitta, exhibition materials from specific museums, exhibition catalogs and press releases, and miscellaneous materials such as school yearbooks. Photographic material includes personal photographs, photographs of artwork, photographs of Scarpitta as a racer, and a photo journal from a friend documenting his trip to see one of Scarpitta's exhibition openings. Video recordings include materials related to Scarpitta's career as a race car driver.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 5 series.

- Series 1: Financial and Legal Records, 1972-2012 (0.4 linear feet; Box 1)

- Series 2: Correspondence, 1976-2007 (1 folder; Box 1)
- Series 3: Printed Material, 1934-2000 (0.4 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 4: Photographs, circa 1960-2007 (0.3 linear feet; Boxes 1, OV 4)
- Series 5: Video Recordings, 1983-2011 (2 linear feet; Boxes 2-3)

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:

Video recordings

Names:

Leo Castelli Gallery

Occupations:

Automobile racing drivers -- California -- Los Angeles  
Automobile racing drivers -- New York (State) -- New York  
Painters -- California -- Los Angeles  
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York  
Sculptors -- California -- Los Angeles  
Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Financial and Legal Records, 1972-2012

#### *0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)*

Financial and legal records include court documents related to Scarpitta's estate, loan agreements with various museums and galleries such as the Leo Castelli Gallery, expenses for various exhibitions, records for commission sculpture for Marlene Dietrich, and appraisal documents. Some of the material is in Italian.

Box 1, Folder 1	Licenses and Registrations, 1972-1977
Box 1, Folder 2	Miscellaneous, 1974-2012
Box 1, Folder 3	Various Exhibition Finances, 1979
Box 1, Folder 4	Loan Agreements and Shipping Bills with Museums, 1979-1981
Box 1, Folder 5	Leo Castelli Gallery, 1980-1990
Box 1, Folder 6	Light Street Expenses, 1988-1989
Box 1, Folder 7-9	Marlene Dietrich Sculpture, 1994
Box 1, Folder 10	The Museum of Modern Art, 2005
Box 1, Folder 11-12	Court Documents Regarding Beneficiaries, 2007-2010
Box 1, Folder 13	Appraisals, 2008
Box 1, Folder 14	Legal Correspondence Concerning Rights to Produced Videos, 2010
Box 1, Folder 15	Legal Correspondence Concerning Videos and Artwork, 2011

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1976-2007

### *1 Folder (Box 1)*

Correspondence material includes personal letters to and from family and friends in both English and Italian.

Box 1, Folder 16

Correspondence, 1976-2007

[Image\(s\)](#)

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## Series 3: Printed Material, 1934-2000

### *0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)*

Printed materials include magazine and newsletter clippings related to Scarpitta, exhibition materials from specific museums and galleries such as the Leo Castelli Gallery and the Portland Center for the Visual Arts, exhibition catalogs and press releases, and miscellaneous materials, such as school yearbooks. Some of the material is in Italian.

Box 1, Folder 17	Yearbooks, 1934
Box 1, Folder 18	Miscellaneous, 1963-1997
Box 1, Folder 19	Magazines and Newsletters, 1966-1991
Box 1, Folder 20	Exhibition Materials, Leo Castelli Gallery, 1975-1992
Box 1, Folder 21	Exhibition Catalogs, 1977-2000
Box 1, Folder 22	Exhibition Materials, Portland Center for the Visual Arts, 1979
Box 1, Folder 23	Exhibition Announcements, 1979-1990
Box 1, Folder 24	Exhibition Articles and Press Releases, 1981-1996
Box 1, Folder 25	Exhibition Material, Scott Hanson Gallery, 1989-1990

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## Series 4: Photographs, circa 1960-2007

*0.3 Linear feet (Box 1, Oversize 4)*

Photographic material includes personal photographs, photographs of artwork, photographs of Scarpitta, and a photo journal from a friend documenting his trip to see one of Scarpitta's exhibition openings.

Box 1, Folder 26          Photo-Journal, 1990

Box 1, Folder 27-28      Photographs, circa 1960-2007

Oversize 4                Oversized Photographs, circa 1960-2007

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## Series 5: Video Recordings, 1983-2011

### 2 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3)

Found here is extensive video documentation, including the artist's video works "Potato Masher," "Sal is Racer," "Racer's Tattoo," "Roar with Gilmore," "Speed to Spare," and raw footage of Scarpitta working and lecturing at the Glassell School of Art.

Box 1, Folder 29	The Bridge, 2011 <i>1 electronic discs (cd)</i>
Box 1, Folder 30	"dirt", circa 2007 <i>1 electronic discs (dvd)</i>
Box 2, Folder 1	Evening Magazine/Message to Leo, 1987 <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i>
Box 2, Folder 2	Glassell School of Art Lecture, 1980s <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i>
Box 2, Folder 3	Exhibition at Maryland Institute, College of Art, 1980s <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i> Label says "Sal #4 Institute Show copy"
Box 2, Folder 4	"Lunar Rally" and "Racer Tattoo", Rough Edits, 1984, October 20 <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i>
Box 2, Folder 5	"Moon with Plane Coming through," Unedited footage <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i> Tape case labeled "Moon, Words, Dad's Navy Slides, Bones and Muscles"
Box 2, Folder 6	"Potato Masher," Unedited footage, 1985 December 15 <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i> Tape label reads "Aberdeen, Sal making tank sounds"
Box 2, Folder 7	"Potato Masher", 1985 <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i> Tape is labelled "edit master" on the side
Box 2, Folder 8	"Potato Masher"/Sal Scarpitta is Racer/Racers Tattoo, circa 1984-1985 <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i> Tape label reads "Titles" "Titles Sal with Netling"
Box 2, Folder 9	Unedited Stock Car Racing, 1984 May 9 <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i> Tape label reads "Stock car racing Darcy, Indi slides"
Box 3, Folder 1-3	"Roar With Gilmore", 1985

3 videocassettes (vhs)

- Folder 1 is the edited master copy, and Folders 2-3 are the rough edits.

edited master copy in Folder 1 is suppressed

- Box 3, Folder 4 "Sal Scarpitta is Racer", 1984  
1 videocassettes (vhs)
- Box 3, Folder 5 "Sal is Racer/Speed to Spare," Rough Edits, 1984  
2 videocassettes (vhs)
- Box 3, Folder 6 Screening of "Sal Scarpitta racer" at Nelsons, 1983  
1 videocassettes (vhs)  
Tape label reads "Racer Master at Nelsons, bird lands and noises, Bk kids in front of Sal's studio"
- Box 3, Folder 7 "Sal Working on Car at Nelsons," Unedited, 1983 November 13  
1 videocassettes (vhs)  
Tape label reads "Sal working on car at Nelson's, Master, original unedited"
- Box 3, Folder 8 "Sal Working on Car at Nelsons," Unedited, 1984 October  
1 videocassettes (vhs)  
Tape label reads "Sal Arden at Nelson's 3/4 of hour"
- Box 3, Folder 9 Scarpitta Scans, undated  
1 electronic discs (cd)

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