



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Sharon Frances Patton  
Research Material Regarding Vincent Smith,  
1968-2005, in the Archives of American Art

Lindsay Alderman

2013 October 31

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

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Sharon Frances Patton research material regarding Vincent Smith
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.smitvinc
<b>Date:</b>	1968-2005
<b>Extent:</b>	0.8 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Patton, Sharon F.
<b>Language:</b>	The collection is in English.
<b>Summary:</b>	The Sharon Frances Patton research material on the artist Vincent Smith measures 0.8 linear feet and dates from 1968-2005. Materials document Smith's career as an artist and include many letters as well as autobiographical writings by him. Also featured in this collection are many printed materials relating to his career including magazines, exhibition materials and clippings. This collection also includes three sound cassettes featuring a profile of Smith and his thoughts on music.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Sharon Frances Patton in 2012.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid prepared by Lindsay Alderman in 2013. The collection has been minimally rearranged and retains the existing/original folder titles when possible. All materials have been rehoused in archival folders and boxes for long-term stability, but often staples and other fasteners have not been removed. Materials within folders have not been rearranged.

### Preferred Citation

Sharon Frances Patton research material regarding Vincent Smith, 1968-2005. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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Use of original papers requires an appointment. Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate access copy requires advance notice.

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## Biographical / Historical

Sharon Frances Patton (1944- ) is a art historian and museum director in Baltimore, Maryland. Vincent Smith (1929-2003) was a painter from New York City. His work was exhibited extensively and is now part of many distinguished collections.

Patton earned her BA in humanities with an emphasis on Studio Art from Roosevelt University in Chicago. This was followed by an MA from University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and a Ph.D. in African Art History at Northwestern University. During and after these degrees she was a professor at various colleges around the country as well as a curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Director of the Center for African American Studies at University of Michigan and the Director of the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College. From 2003-2008 she was the Director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art. Throughout her career she has organized around 20 exhibitions, compiled catalogs (one of which was on Vincent Smith's "Riding on a Blue Note" exhibit), written articles and essays and given lectures. She has also written two books, *Memory and Metaphor: The Art of Romare Bearden* and *African American Art*.

Smith became a full-time artist in 1953 after stints as a hobo, in the army and as a post office worker. Around this time he studied art at the Brooklyn Museum Art School, New York City's Art Students League and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine on a scholarship. He also cited other African American artists as valuable resources for the development of his work. Much of his early work focused on the culture of jazz in New York City, but in the mid-1950s, with the start of the Civil Rights Movement, his work took on a more political tone. His first solo show was in 1955 at the Brooklyn Museum Art School Gallery and this was followed by many more solo and group shows throughout his career. His work is now in the collections of many museums as well as President Clinton, who was given one of Smith's pieces at his first inauguration. In 1980 he received a college degree from Empire State College at the State University of New York, Saratoga.

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## Scope and Contents

The Sharon Frances Patton research material on the artist Vincent Smith measures 0.8 linear feet and dates from 1968-2005. The research materials document Smith's career as an artist and include many letters as well as autobiographical writings by him. Also featured in this collection are many printed materials relating to his career including magazines, exhibition materials and clippings. This collection also includes three sound cassettes featuring a profile of Smith and his thoughts on music.

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## Arrangement

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1980-2004 (3 folders; Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1982-1998 (2 folders; Box 1)
- Series 3: Writings, 1976-circa 1994 (5 folders; Box 1)

- Series 4: Printed Material, 1968-2005 (0.4 linear feet; Boxes 1-2)
- Series 5: Sound Recordings, 1986-1989 (3 folders; Box 2)

The collection is arranged as 5 series:

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

African American artists

Types of Materials:

Sound recordings

Names:

Smith, Vincent, 1929-

Occupations:

Art historians  
Painters

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1980-2004

#### *3 Folders (Box 1)*

Found here are a curriculum vitae, photographs and an obituary of Vincent Smith. The seven photographs feature Smith, his family and his artwork.

Box 1, Folder 1	Curriculum Vitae, 1987
Box 1, Folder 2	Photographs, circa 1980-1998
Box 1, Folder 3	Obituary, 2004

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1982-1998

### *2 Folders (Box 1)*

Correspondence includes letters written by Vincent Smith to Sharon Frances Patton in which he provides thoughts on travel, personal events and the African American experience. Also included here are letters to Patton by others regarding Smith, including attached photocopied newspaper clippings about one of his shows, and Minnie Evans.

Box 1, Folder 4                      Letters to Sharon Frances Patton from Vincent Smith, 1982-1998

Box 1, Folder 5                      Letters from Others to Sharon Frances Patton, 1991-1993

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## Series 3: Writings, 1976-circa 1994

### *5 Folders (Box 1)*

Included here are writings by both Sharon Frances Patton and Vincent Smith. From Smith are two artist statements, a description of study regarding the "Methodology and Philosophy of African American Artists/ Dialogues with Contemporary Artists", some of his autobiographical notes and some notes on art. From Patton are some of her notes on Smith, possibly from an interview.

Box 1, Folder 6	Artist Statements, 1976-1979
Box 1, Folder 7	Description of Study, circa 1990s
Box 1, Folder 8	Vincent Smith's Autobiographical Notes, 1978-1982
Box 1, Folder 9	Sharon Frances Patton's Notes on Vincent Smith, 1982
Box 1, Folder 10	Vincent Smith's Notes on Art, circa 1994

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## Series 4: Printed Material, 1968-2005

### *0.4 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)*

Printed Material contains various publications including several issues of the *National Murals Network International Newsletter* and *Community Murals* magazine. Also included are press releases and exhibition publications regarding Vincent Smith's exhibitions from 1986-2005 as well as magazine and newspaper clippings featuring Smith from 1968-1994. There are a few miscellaneous printed materials including a series of notecards featuring reproductions of Smith's paintings, information about another artists' show and a book jacket.

Box 1, Folder 11	<i>National Murals Network International Newsletter, 1979-1980</i>
Box 1, Folder 12	<i>Community Murals Magazine, 1981-1984</i>
Box 1, Folder 13	<i>Community Murals Magazine, 1984-1987</i>
Box 1, Folder 14	Magazines, Journals and Anthologies, circa 1984-1985
Box 1, Folder 15	Press Releases, 1981-circa 1993
Box 2, Folder 1	Magazine and Newspaper Clippings, 1968-1994
Box 2, Folder 2	Exhibition Publications, 1969-1978
Box 2, Folder 3	Exhibition Publications, 1980-1989
Box 2, Folder 4	Exhibition Publications, 1990-2005
Box 2, Folder 5	Miscellaneous Printed Materials, circa 1970s-1990s

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## Series 5: Sound Recordings, 1986-1989

### *3 Folders (Box 2)*

Found here are three sound cassettes. One features a profile of Vincent Smith by David Driskell and Peter Mark from his radio show, "Vincent Smith Dialogues" on WBAI-FM radio and the others are entitled "Vincent D. Smith's Tapes on Music".

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|-----------------|--|
| Box 2, Folder 6 | Profile of Vincent D. Smith , 1988<br><i>Includes one sound cassette.</i>    |
| Box 2, Folder 7 | Vincent Smith's Tapes on Music, 1989<br><i>Includes two sound cassettes.</i> |
| Box 2, Folder 8 | Artists Featured on "Vincent Smith Dialogues", 1986-1988                     |

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