



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Sylvia Snowden Papers, 1962-2017, in the Archives of American Art

Rayna Andrews

Funding for the processing of this collection  
was provided by the Henry Luce Foundation.

2021/08/18

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/>

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	2
Container Listing .....	4
Series 1: Biographical Material, 1962, 1985-2004.....	4
Series 2: Correspondence, 1975-2005.....	5
Series 3: Professional Activities, 1985-2017.....	6
Series 4: Printed Material, 1964-2017.....	8
Series 5: Photographic Material and Artwork, 1989-2005.....	9

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Sylvia Snowden papers
<b>Date:</b>	1962-2017
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.snowsylv
<b>Creator:</b>	Snowden, Sylvia
<b>Extent:</b>	1.7 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of African American abstract painter Sylvia Snowden measure 1.7 linear feet and date from 1962 to 2017. The collection contains biographical material, including recorded interviews with Snowden; correspondence; material related to professional activities, including exhibitions and symposia; printed material; and photographic material, as well as one sketch.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Sylvia Snowden papers were donated in 2019 by Sylvia Snowden, as part of the Archives' African American Collecting Initiative funded by the Henry Luce Foundation.

### Processing Information

The collection was minimally processed and a finding aid prepared by Rayna Andrews in 2021 with funding from the Henry Luce Foundation.

### Preferred Citation

Sylvia Snowden papers, 1962-2017. 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 Reference Services for more information.

### Conditions Governing Use

The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning such rights and restrictions and it is the user's responsibility to determine whether rights or restrictions exist and to obtain any necessary permission to access, use, reproduce and publish the collections. Please refer to the Smithsonian's Terms of Use for additional information.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Sylvia Snowden (1942- ) is an African American abstract painter in Washington, D.C. known for her large mixed-media works that convey a sense of texture or the "feel of paint."

Snowden earned both a Bachelor and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Howard University. She also attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine and earned a certificate from le Grande Chaumière in Paris, France. She has served as an instructor, visiting lecturer, panelist, and artist-in-residence at universities, galleries, and art schools across the country and internationally. Her work has been included in exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Parish Gallery, and the California African American Museum; as well as in exhibitions in Chile, the Netherlands, Ethiopia, Australia, the Bahamas, France, Mexico, Italy, and Japan.

---

## Scope and Contents

The papers of African American abstract painter Sylvia Snowden measure 1.7 linear feet and date from 1962 to 2017. The collection contains biographical material, including recorded interviews with Snowden, resumes and chronologies, and certificates; correspondence with galleries and museums including M. Hanks Gallery and the Corcoran Gallery of Art; material related to professional activities, including exhibitions and symposia, and related audiovisual and born-digital materials; printed material, including exhibition invitations, exhibition catalogs, calendars, clippings, and magazines; and a small amount of photographic material, as well as one sketch.

---

## Arrangement

This collection is arranged as five series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1962, 1985-2004 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1975-2005 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 3: Professional Activities, 1985-2017 (Box 1; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 4: Printed Material, 1964-2017 (Boxes 1-3, OV 4; 0.9 linear feet)
- Series 5: Photographic Material and Artwork, 1989-2005 (Box 3; 0.1 linear feet)

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

African American artists  
African American painters  
Women artists  
Women painters

Types of Materials:

Video recordings

Names:

Corcoran Gallery of Art  
M. Hanks Gallery (Santa, Monica, Calif.)

Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture

Occupations:

Painters -- Washington (D.C.)

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1962, 1985-2004

#### 0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series contains an address list; certificates; recorded interviews on VHS and a transcript of an interview with Sylvia Snowden that originally aired on NPR's *All Things Considered*; and copies of Snowden's resume and chronologies of her exhibitions.

Box 1, Folder 1	Address List, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Certificates, 1962, 1991 Notes: Includes certificate from Académie de la Grande Chaumière and certificate of appreciation from the Anacostia Museum.
Box 1, Folder 3	Interview Recording, "Sylvia Snowden Interview — Raw Footage Lancaster", undated 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
Box 1, Folder 4	Interview Recording, What Follows... Interview with Chuck Forsman at University of Colorado, Boulder, circa 1990 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
Box 1, Folder 5	Interview Transcript, Sylvia Snowden on Weekend All Things Considered, 2000
Box 1, Folder 6	Resumes and Chronologies, 1985-2004

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 2: Correspondence, 1975-2005

## 0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series contains Snowden's correspondence with galleries and museums, including M. Hanks Gallery and the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

Box 1, Folder 7	Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1989 Notes: Includes correspondence related to Snowden's exhibition, <i>Malik Farewell, Till We Meet Again</i> . Also includes a list of artwork loaned to the Corcoran.
Box 1, Folder 8	M. Hanks Gallery (Erick Hanks), 1988-1989 Notes: Also includes printed material.
Box 1, Folder 9	Judith Wilson, 1989 Notes: Includes photocopies of works written by Wilson.
Box 1, Folder 10	General Correspondence, A-I, 1975-2000 Notes: Also includes photocopy of guest book for <i>Abstract in Black</i> exhibition at School 33 Art Center.
Box 1, Folder 11	General Correspondence, L-P, 1985-1994
Box 1, Folder 12	General Correspondence, R-Y, 1986-2000

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 3: Professional Activities, 1985-2017

### 0.5 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Included in this series are materials related to Sylvia Snowden's exhibitions, speaking engagements, and fellowships. Also included are materials related to sale of her work and teaching at the University of the District of Columbia. Files may contain correspondence, contracts, invoices, printed material, and photographs. This series also includes audiovisual and born-digital material.

Box 1, Folder 13	The African American Art World in Twentieth-Century Washington, DC Symposium, National Gallery of Art, 2017
Box 1, Folder 14	Artist Statements, circa 2009
Box 1, Folder 15	Black Women Artists/1987 (1987), Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists, 1987
Box 1, Folder 16	DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities Grants-in-Aid Fellowship, 1988-1989 Notes: Includes application materials, as well as financial documentation for grant period.
Box 1, Folder 17	Gathered Visions: Selected Works by African American Women Artists (1990-1991), Anacostia Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1990-1992
Box 1, Folder 18	Introspection: Contemporary Art by Americans and Brazilians of African Descent (1989), California Afro-American Museum, 1988-1989 Notes: Also includes correspondence and poster related to the California Institute Intercultural Arts Project visiting artist residency.
Box 1, Folder 19	Invoices and Insurance Certificate, 1989-2016 Notes: Includes material related to the creation of Sylvia Snowden's website.
Box 1, Folder 20	Loan Forms, 1985-1994
Box 1, Folder 21	Malik Farewell, Till We Meet Again Recordings, 2000 3 Videocassettes (VHS) Notes: One tape labeled "Malik Farewell Sylvia Snowden Corcoran Gallery." Unlabeled cassettes include one television segment about the exhibition and one other recording that appears to be at the gallery.
Box 1, Folder 22	Painting in Your Voice: A Black Woman's Guide to Developing an Artistic Career Book Project, circa 2008
Box 1, Folder 23	Sales Records, 1987-1988
Box 1, Folder 24	Slide Lists, 1990, undated



	Notes:	Also includes label from National Museum of Women in the Arts.
Box 1, Folder 25		<a href="#">Sylvia Snowden Portfolio, 1992-circa 2010</a> 3 Electronic discs (CD) Notes: Includes price lists, list of selected exhibitions, and printed material. Portfolio discs contain artist statement, curriculum vitae, images, and a slideshow.
Box 1, Folder 26		University of Colorado at Boulder Visiting Artist Program, 1989-1992
Box 1, Folder 27		University of the District of Columbia, 1987-1990 Notes: Includes personnel and payment forms; memos and correspondence; and academic calendar.

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 4: Printed Material, 1964-2017

## 0.9 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3, OV 4)

Scope and Contents: This series includes calendars, clippings, announcements and invitations to Sylvia Snowden exhibitions, exhibition catalogs, magazines, newsletters, and press releases.

Box 1, Folder 28	Calendar, Baltimore Black Arts Calendar, 1974
Oversize 4	Calendar, Visions of 1993: A Calendar of Frameable Art by African American Women, 1993
Box 1, Folder 29	Clippings, 1975-2004
Box 1, Folder 30	Clippings, 1979-2000
Oversize 4	Oversize Clippings, 1985-1994
Box 1, Folder 31	<a href="#">Exhibition Announcements and Invitations, 1970-1995</a>
Box 1, Folder 32	<a href="#">Exhibition Announcements and Invitations, 2000-2016</a>
Box 1, Folder 33	Exhibition Catalogs, 1964-1979
Box 1, Folder 34	Exhibition Catalogs, 1986
Box 2, Folder 1-4	Exhibition Catalogs, 1987-1995, 2016
Box 2, Folder 5	Magazines, ARTnews, 2005-2007
Box 2, Folder 6	Magazines, Art in America, 2005-2007
Box 2, Folder 7	Magazines, New Art Examiner, 1988
Box 3, Folder 1-2	Magazines and Journals, 1989-1992, 2002-2017
Box 3, Folder 3	Newsletters and Bulletins, 1964, 1984-2007 Notes: Includes Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture bulletin, brochure, and alumni newsletter.
Box 3, Folder 4	Press Release and Flyers, Second Annual Arts Exhibition, The Association of Black Arts/East and Thirdworld Museum Illrd, circa 1969
Box 3, Folder 5	Press Releases, 1987-1993

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 5: Photographic Material and Artwork, 1989-2005

### 0.1 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: This small series includes photographs, negatives, and slides of Snowden's artwork and of an exhibition, likely *Malik Farewell, Till We Meet Again*. Also included is one unidentified sketch.

Box 3, Folder 6      [Photographs, Exhibition, 2000](#)  
Notes:              Photographs of guests viewing exhibition, likely *Malik Farewell, Till We Meet Again*.

Box 3, Folder 7      [Photographs, Works of Art, 1989-2005](#)  
Notes:              Includes photographs, slides, and negatives.

Box 3, Folder 8      Sketch, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)