



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Papers of Benedict  
Tatti, 1936-2011, bulk 1945-1993,  
in the Archives of American Art

Joy Weiner

July 19, 2011

Archives of American Art  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Benedict Tatti papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.tattbene
<b>Date:</b>	1936-2011 (bulk 1945-1993)
<b>Extent:</b>	1.8 linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Tatti, Benedict, 1917-1993
<b>Language:</b>	Multiple languages  Some records are in French.  English; French
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of New York sculptor, painter, educator, and video artist, Benedict Tatti (1917-1993) measure 1.8 linear feet and date from 1936-2011, with the bulk of the collection dating from 1945-1993. Papers consist of biographical material, correspondence, project files, subject files, exhibition files, writings, notes, and lists, printed materials, and photographs. Exhibition files and printed material, such as catalogues and checklists provide an overview of Tatti's activities as a sculptor and video artist. Also, photographs of artwork are a rich source of provenance-related information on Tatti's sculptures.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Benedict Tatti papers were donated by Adele Tatti, widow of Benedict Tatti, in 2010.

### Processing Information

The papers were processed by Joy Weiner in June 2011.

### Preferred Citation

Benedict Tatti, 1936-2011, bulk 1945-1993. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

## Conditions Governing Use

The Benedict Tatti papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

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## Biographical Note

Benedict Tatti (1917-1993) worked in New York as a sculptor, painter, educator, and video artist.

Born in New York in 1917, Tatti began his art education at Haaren High School. He continued his studies at the Roerich Museum with Louis Slobodkin, the Art Students League with William Zorach and Ossip Zadkine, and the Leonardo da Vinci School of Art under Attilio Piccirelli. Later in his career, he attended the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts. During World War II, Tatti served in the United States Army Air Force, where he spent three years assigned to variety of projects. In 1948, Benedict Tatti married Adele Rosenberg in New York City.

Throughout his career, Tatti continuously experimented with various media. From 1952-1963, Tatti executed sculptural models of architectural and consumer products for the industrial designers, Raymond Loewy Associates; later he became a color consultant for the firm. In the 1960s, influenced by the Abstract Expressionists, Tatti turned from carving directly in wood and stone to creating assemblage sculptures, using bronze metal and other industrial materials. During this period, Tatti spent summers on Monhegan Island in Maine, where he developed his water coloring techniques. In 1963, Tatti was hired to teach sculpture at the High School of Art and Design in New York, a position that he held for fifteen years.

In the 1970s, Tatti, with no previous background in video work developed technology for video imaging. He became an associate member of the Kitchen at the Mercer Arts Center exhibiting his video sculptures along with other early innovators of this new art form. In 1975, he invented a rewind reel adapter device. Despite health problems, Tatti continued to work and exhibit into the 1980s. He assisted his brother, Alexander Tatti and his nephew, Steven Tatti on the restoration of the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island, which was completed in 1985.

Benedict Tatti received solo and group exhibitions at museums and galleries in the United States and abroad, including the Burr Gallery, Claude Bernard Galleries, Metropolitan Museum of Art, under the Artists for Victory Program, Museum of Modern Art, National Gallery of Art, Northeast Gallery, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the Roko Gallery. Also, Tatti's work was regularly featured in annual exhibitions of several arts organizations: American Society of Contemporary Artists, Annual Avant Garde Festival, Audubon Artists, Brooklyn Society of Artists, and Painters and Sculptors Society of New Jersey. His awards included the National Soldier Art Competition at the National Gallery of Art (1945); Artist-in-Residence, National Center of Experiments TV, San Francisco, California, (1969); and the Creative Artists Public Service (CAPS), (1972). Tatti's artwork is in the permanent collections of the American Numismatic Society, Art Students League, Dumbarton Oaks, Monhegan Museum, Smithsonian Institution, and the Usdan Center for the Creative and Performing Arts.

Benedict Tatti died on July 30, 1993.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of New York sculptor, painter, educator, and video artist, Benedict Tatti (1917-1993) measure 1.8 linear feet and date from 1936-2011, with the bulk of the collection dating from 1945-1993. Papers

consist of biographical material, correspondence, project files, subject files, exhibition files, writings, notes, and lists, printed materials, and photographs. Exhibition files and printed material, such as catalogues and checklists provide an overview of Tatti's activities as a sculptor and video artist. Also, photographs of artwork are a rich source of provenance-related information on Tatti's sculptures.

Biographical materials include curriculum vitae, *Who's Who in American Art*, memberships, and awards. Correspondence is primarily from colleagues, dealers, collectors, and representatives of museums, galleries, and arts organizations. There are a few outgoing letters from Benedict Tatti, including a handmade holiday card. Among the notable correspondents are Jane Canfield, Lloyd Goodrich, Louis Slobodkin, and William Zorach. Also found is a small portion of Adele Tatti's correspondence relating to her late husband's artwork.

Project files contain Tatti's commissions for Eutectic-Castolin Institute, Staten Island Community College, Statue of Liberty Restoration, and the Usdan Center for the Creative and Performing Arts; application proposals to Creative Artists Public Service program (CAPS); and the artist's invention of the rewind reel adapter. Subject files include Tatti's memberships and activities in professional associations, e.g., American Medallion Sculpture Association, American Numismatic Society, and Audubon Artists; Tatti's Artist-in-Residence proposals for the Television Lab, WNET 13; and his involvement in educational video presentations. Exhibition files consist of scattered materials on Tatti's shows at the Anthology Film Archives; Burr Galleries; Galerie Claude Bernard; The Kitchen, Mercer Arts Gallery; Northeast Harbor Gallery; and Roko Gallery.

Writings, notes, and lists include writings by Benedict Tatti; writings about Benedict Tatti, including a statement on the artist by Isamu Noguchi; and lists compiled by Adele Tatti relating to her late husband's work. Artwork contains Tatti's sketch of a sculpture for the Northeast Harbor Museum and sketches of medal designs. Printed material consists of announcements, brochures, invitations, exhibition catalogues and checklists, clippings, periodicals, newsletters, reproductions, other printed matter, and monographs. Photographs include black and white prints of portrait shots of Benedict Tatti, Tatti in his studio and with others, video equipment and Tatti's video art; also found are color photographs of Tatti's sculptures and design maquettes.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 9 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1936-1993 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1945-2008 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 3: Project Files, 1966-2005 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 4: Subject Files, circa 1950s-2008 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 5: Exhibition Files, 1945-1992 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 6: Writings, Notes, and Lists, circa 1940s-2009 (Box 1; 4 folders)
- Series 7: Artwork, 1970-circa 1990s (Box 1; 3 folders)
- Series 8: Printed Material, 1937-1976 (Boxes 1-2; 0.8 linear feet)
- Series 9: Photographs (circa 1936-1970s), circa 1964-2010 (Box 3; 0.4 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:

Cultures:

Educators -- New York (State) -- New York  
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York  
Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York  
Video artists -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Awards  
Christmas cards  
Designs  
Lists  
Notes  
Photographs  
Sketches

Names:

American Medallic Sculpture Association  
American Numismatic Association  
Anthology Film Archives  
Audubon Artists (New York, N.Y.)  
Canfield, Jane  
Galerie Claude Bernard  
Goodrich, Lloyd, 1897-1987  
Mercer Arts Center (Organization: New York, N.Y.)  
Noguchi, Isamu, 1904-1988  
Roko Gallery (New York, N.Y.)  
Slobodkin, Louis, 1903-  
Zorach, William, 1887-1966

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1936-1993

Biographical material contains curriculum vitae, a commencement program from Haaren High School, a Honorable Discharge certificate from the United States Army, typescripts and drafts of entries for *Who Was Who in American Art* and *Dictionary of American Sculptors*, membership cards, an application for a John Guggenheim Fellowship, award certificates, a program from Benedict Tatti's memorial service, and miscellaneous biographical material.

Files are arranged by format and the materials within the folders are arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 1	Curriculum Vitae, circa 1960s-2009
Box 1, Folder 2	Commencement Program, Haaren High School, 1936
Box 1, Folder 3	Honorable Discharge Certificate from the United States Army, 1946
Box 1, Folder 4	<i>Who's Who in American Art</i> and <i>Dictionary of American Sculptors</i> Entries, 1968-1991, undated
Box 1, Folder 5	Memberships, 1968-1975
Box 1, Folder 6	Award Certificates, 1949-1986
Box 1, Folder 7	Application for John Guggenheim Fellowship, 1945
Box 1, Folder 8	Program from Memorial Service for Benedict Tatti, 1993
Box 1, Folder 9	Miscellaneous Items, 1939-1975

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1945-2008

### *0.1 linear feet (Box 1)*

Correspondence consists of letters, announcements, and copies of e-mails to Benedict Tatti from colleagues, dealers, collectors, representatives of museums and arts organizations, among others. There are a few letters from Tatti, including a handmade holiday card. Letters pertain to Tatti's exhibitions and commissions, his teaching positions, awards and honors; also found are requests for biographical information. Notable correspondents include Jane Canfield, Lloyd Goodrich, Louis Slobodkin, and William Zorach. Included is a small portion of Adele Tatti's correspondence concerning the preservation and archiving of videotapes created by Tatti in the 1970s.

Files are arranged in chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 10	1945-1959
Box 1, Folder 11	1960-1968, undated
Box 1, Folder 12	1969-1983
Box 1, Folder 13	1985-1995
Box 1, Folder 14-15	Adele Tatti's Correspondence, 2003-2008 <i>2 folders</i>

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## Series 3: Project Files, 1966-2005

### *0.1 linear feet (Box 1)*

This series includes Benedict Tatti's commissions, including an unexecuted project; grant applications to conduct experimental work with video technology and art; and a statement of purpose and design for Tatti's invention of the rewind reel adapter.

Materials consist of correspondence, application forms, proposals, proposed budgets, a list of Tatti's sculptures, architectural renderings and design sketches, reproductions of artwork, printed matter, clippings, and supporting materials.

Files are arranged in chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 16	Staten Island Community College, 1966
Box 1, Folder 17-19	Creative Artists Public Service Program (CAPS), 1970s-1976, undated <i>3 folders</i>
Box 1, Folder 20	Eutectic-Castolin Institute, 1973
Box 1, Folder 21	Usdan Center for the Creative and Performing Arts, 1973-2005
Box 1, Folder 22	Rewind Reel Adapter, 1975
Box 1, Folder 23	Walter Burley Griffin Memorial Competition, 1977
Box 1, Folder 24	Statue of Liberty Restoration, 1985-1986

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## Series 4: Subject Files, circa 1950s-2008

### *0.1 linear feet (Box 1)*

This series consists of files relating to Benedict Tatti's activities in professional associations; his proposals for an artist-in-residence fellowship at the Television Lab, WNET 13; and schedules of Tatti's educational video presentations.

Materials include letters, forms, deeds of gifts, draft proposals, lists of members, annotated checklists, informational sheets, printed material, clippings, and brochures.

Files are arranged in alphabetical order and the materials within the folder are arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 25	American Medallic Sculpture Association, 1988-1993
Box 1, Folder 26	American Numismatic Society, 1988-1993, 1972
Box 1, Folder 27	Audubon Artists, Inc., 1976-1997, undated
Box 1, Folder 28	Avon Products, Inc., circa 1950s
Box 1, Folder 29	National Center for Experiments in Television, KQED-TV, 2005-2008
Box 1, Folder 30	Proposal for Artist-in-Residence, Television Lab, WNET 13, 1972-1977
Box 1, Folder 31	Video Presentations, 1971-1978, undated

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## Series 5: Exhibition Files, 1945-1992

*0.1 linear feet (Box 1)*

This series consists of scattered files of Benedict Tatti's solo and group exhibitions during the 1960s and 1970s.

Files include letters, biographical information, checklists, price lists, contract, receipts, exhibition announcements, press releases, calendars of events, exhibition jury notices, printed materials, clippings, and brochures.

Files are arranged in chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 32	Galerie Claude Bernard, "Aspects De La Sculpture Américaine," 1960
Box 1, Folder 33	Burr Galleries, "Benedict Tatti, An Exhibition of Watercolors," 1961
Box 1, Folder 34	Northeast Harbor Gallery, 1961, undated
Box 1, Folder 35	Roko Gallery, 1967
Box 1, Folder 36	The Kitchen, Mercer Arts Center, 1972-1973
Box 1, Folder 37	Annual Avant Garde Festival of New York, 1972-1980
Box 1, Folder 38	Anthology Film Archives, 1974-1975
Box 1, Folder 39-40	Miscellaneous Exhibition Materials, 1945-1992 <i>2 folders</i>

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## Series 6: Writings, Notes, and Lists, circa 1940s-2009

### *4 folders (Box 1)*

This series includes writings and notes by Benedict Tatti on sculpture and video art and writings about the artist, including a statement by Isamu Noguchi on Tatti. Adele Tatti compiled lists on Benedict Tatti's paintings and sculptures housed in museums and public collections, a partial list of titles of Tatti's sculptures, an inventory of videotapes donated to the Anthology of Film Archives, and a list of selected art publications that reference her late husband's work.

Files are arranged in chronological order.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 41-43 | Writings and Notes by Benedict Tatti, circa 1940s-1976<br><i>3 folders</i> |
| Box 1, Folder 44    | Writings about Benedict Tatti, 1966-1967, undated                          |
| Box 1, Folder 45    | Lists by Adele Tatti, circa 2007-2009                                      |

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## Series 7: Artwork, 1970-circa 1990s

*3 folders (Box 1)*

There is a preliminary sketch of a sculpture by Tatti, in pen, and pen and pencil sketches of Tatti's medal designs.

Box 1, Folder 46            Sketch of Sculpture for Northeast Harbor Museum, 1970

Box 1, Folder 47            Sketches of Medal Designs, circa 1970s-1990s

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## Series 8: Printed Material, 1937-1976

*0.8 linear feet (Boxes 1-2)*

Printed material contains announcements; invitations; brochures, exhibition catalogues and checklists; clippings; periodicals; newsletters; and reproductions, including Benedict Tatti's prototype of "Bob's Big Boy," a commissioned work for a chain of restaurants in the United States. Monographs include *Soldier Art, An Infantry Journal*, featuring Tatti's sculpture for which he won first prize in the United States Army's National Soldier Art Competition and two books on video art that include essays written by Benedict Tatti.

Files are arranged by format and materials in the folders are in chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 48	Announcements, 1961-1974
Box 1, Folder 49	Brochures, 1960-1984
Box 1, Folder 50	Invitations, 1950-1990, undated
Box 1, Folder 51-57	Exhibition Catalogues, 1939-1989 <i>7 folders</i>
Box 2, Folder 1	Exhibition Catalogues, 1990-2011
Box 2, Folder 2-3	Exhibition Checklists, 1946-1988 <i>2 folders</i>
Box 2, Folder 4-5	Clippings, 1937-1986, undated <i>2 folders</i>
Box 2, Folder 6	Periodicals, 1967-1970
Box 2, Folder 7	Newsletters, 1946-1982
Box 2, Folder 8-9	Reproductions, circa 1950s-2010 <i>2 folders</i>
Box 2, Folder 10	Other Printed Material, circa 1946-2010 <i>2 folders</i>
Box 2, Folder 11-13	Monographs, 1945-1976 <i>3 folders</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Soldier Art, An Infantry Journal</i> (United States: Special Services Division, Army Service Forces, 1945)</li> <li>• <i>Videospace and Image Experience</i> (San Francisco: National Center for the Experiments in Television, 1972)</li> <li>• <i>Video Art: An Anthology</i> (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976)</li> </ul>

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## Series 9: Photographs, 1936-1993

### *0.4 linear feet (Box 3)*

This series includes black and white prints of Benedict Tatti, Tatti in his studio by himself and with others, video equipment and Tatti's video art. Many of the color prints of Tatti's sculptures and design maquettes include provenance-related information on the back of the photograph.

Files are arranged by subject and the materials within the folders are arranged chronologically.

Box 3, Folder 1-3	Benedict Tatti, circa 1964-1970s <i>3 folders</i>
Box 3, Folder 4	Video Equipment in Benedict Tatti's Studio, circa 1970s
Box 3, Folder 5	Benedict Tatti's Video Art, circa 1970s
Box 3, Folder 6-11	Artwork (circa 1936-1970s), 2008-2010 <i>7 folders</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sculptures</li><li>• Design Maquettes</li></ul>

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