



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Tony Vevers Papers, 1947-2008,
bulk 1960-1999, in the Archives of American Art

Harriet E. Shapiro

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Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | Tony Vevers papers |
| Identifier: | AAA.vevetony |
| Date: | 1947-2008 (bulk 1960-1999) |
| Extent: | 3.4 Linear feet |
| Creator: | Vevers, Tony |
| Language: | English Collection is in English. |
| Summary: | The papers of painter and art historian Tony Vevers measure 3.4 linear feet and date from 1947 to 2008, with the bulk of materials dating from 1960 to 1999. The collection concerns his career as a painter and teacher and his research and writings about the history of art in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Found within the papers are correspondence, writings, subject files, printed material, and photographs. |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The papers were donated to the Archives of American Art in 2013 by Elspeth Halvorsen-Vevers the widow of Vevers.

Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Arts are two oral history interviews with Tony Vevers, one conducted by Dorothy Seckler 1965 September 9, the second conducted by Robert F. Brown in 1998 July 9 and August 25.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared in 2014 by Harriet E. Shapiro.

Preferred Citation

Tony Vevers papers, 1947-2008, bulk 1960-1999. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original materials requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

The Tony Vevers 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.

Biographical / Historical

Painter and art historian, Tony Vevers (1926-2008) and his artist wife Elspeth Halvorsen (b. 1929) lived and worked in Provincetown, Massachusetts, as year-round or summer residents from 1955 to 2006. From 1964 to 1988, Vevers taught art and art history at Purdue University in Indiana. An active participant in the Provincetown art community, he was also an historian of the Provincetown art scene.

Vevers was born in London, England and immigrated to the United States in 1940, graduating from the Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut and Yale University. Following college he studied in Florence, Italy, and with Hans Hofmann in New York City, where he met his wife Elspeth Halvorsen. The couple had two daughters, one of whom, Tabitha is also an artist.

Vevers, active in the Abstract Expressionist movement, had several one-man exhibitions and participated in over one hundred group exhibitions. His works are in the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC, the Delgado Museum in New Orleans and many universities, corporate, and private collections in the United States and abroad.

Tony Vevers died in Chatham, Massachusetts on March 2, 2008 following complications from pneumonia.

Scope and Contents

The papers of painter and art historian Tony Vevers measure 3.4 linear feet and date from 1947 to 2008, with the bulk of materials dating from 1960 to 1999. The collection concerns his career as a painter and teacher and his research and writings about the history of art in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Found within the papers are correspondence, writings, subject files, printed material, and photographs.

Among the biographical materials are résumés, a personal statement, the transcript of Tabitha Vevers's 1986 "Conversation with My Father," and applications for grants to study Provincetown artists and the history of the Provincetown art community from the 1920s to the 1950s. Personal and professional includes some letters to his wife Elspeth.

The collection as a whole—and especially Vevers's writings and subject files—focuses on the Provincetown art community, its history and significance. Vevers's writings include many lectures prepared for classes he taught at Purdue University and the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, catalog essays, and notes. There are notes and research materials about artists Houghton Cranford Smith, E. Ambrose Webster, Edwin Dickinson, and Lucy and William L'Engle, and subject files about the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, Long Point Gallery, and other galleries in the area, as well as a file of Provincetown-related obituaries and eulogies for Hans Hofmann, Robert Motherwell, and Jack Tworok, with Vevers's eulogies for Tworok and Myron Stout.

Printed materials consist mainly of clippings, exhibition catalogs and announcements relating to Vevers and his art interests. Artwork consists of a small print and watercolor, probably by Vevers, as well as a pen-and-ink portrait by an unidentified artist.

Photographs are mainly of artwork by Vevers. The two images of Vevers show him as a young boy and in 1984 at work in his studio. There are several photographs of exhibition installations at the Sun Gallery in Provincetown, 1958-1959, identified artists are: Yvonne Andersen, Dominic Falcone, Red Grooms, Taro and Gwen Yamamoto.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in 7 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1962-2000 (Box 1; 1 folder)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1950s-2006 (Box 1; 0.1 linear foot)
- Series 3: Writings, 1947-2008 (Boxes 1-2; 1.9 linear feet)
- Series 4: Subject Files, 1954-2006 (Boxes 2-3; 0.7 linear foot)
- Series 5: Printed Material, 1960s-2008 (Boxes 3-4; 0.7 linear foot)
- Series 6: Artwork, circa 1950s-circa 2005 (Box 4; 2 folders)
- Series 7: Photographs, circa 1950s-1984 (Box 4; 0.1 linear foot)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Abstract expressionism
Art -- History -- Study and teaching
Art -- Study and teaching
Art historians -- Massachusetts
Art, Modern -- 19th century
Artists' studios -- Photographs
Educators -- Massachusetts
Painters -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown
Transcripts

Types of Materials:

Photographs
Portraits
Prints
Watercolor paintings

Names:

Andersen, Yvonne
Dickinson, Edwin Walter, 1891-1978
Falcone, Dominic
Grooms, Red
Halvorsen, Elspeth
Hofmann, Hans, 1880-1966
L'Engle, Lucy, 1889-1978
L'Engle, William, 1884-1957
Long Point Gallery (Provincetown, Mass.)
Motherwell, Robert

Provincetown Art Association
Purdue University -- Faculty
Smith, Houghton Cranford, 1887-1983
Stout, Myron, 1908-1987
Sun Gallery (Provincetown, Mass.)
Tworkov, Jack
Vevers, Tabitha
Webster, E. Ambrose (Edwin Ambrose), 1869-1935
Yamamoto, Gwen
Yamamoto, Taro

Geographic Names:

Provincetown (Mass.) -- description and travel

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1962-2000

1 Folder (Box 1)

Biographical material includes a personal essay by Vevers and his résumé. Two grant applications request funding to study Provincetown's art and artists of the 1920s-1940s.

Box 1, Folder 1 Biographical Materials, 1962-2000

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1950s-2006

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Correspondence, both personal and professional, consists mostly of incoming letters, some addressed to Vevers's wife Elspeth Halvorsen. Also included are copies of letters neither written nor received by Vevers, including two letters concerning John P. Sedgewick, Jr.

Box 1, Folder 2-3 Correspondence, 1950s-2006, undated

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Series 3: Writings, 1947-2008

1.9 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Writings by Vevers include catalog essays, essays, lectures, art history course materials and notes concerning art history and criticism. Many writings relate to Vevers's research on interest in art and the artists and art of Provincetown. Lectures and notes prepared for classes at Purdue University and the Provincetown Art Association and Museum reflect his work as a teacher; the course materials were added to and enriched over time. Also included is a Writings by others are a thesis by John P. Sedgewick, Jr. and a the draft of an art history text book by an identified author. of unclear authorship.

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| Box 1 | By Vevers |
| Box 1, Folder 4-5 | Catalog Essays, Provincetown Art Association, 1980s-2008 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Lectures and Writings, Miscellaneous, 1990s, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | "Mars & Squire", circa 2002 |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | "A New Approach to Life Drawing", 1967 |
| Box 1 | Provincetown Artists Notes and Research |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Edwin Dickinson, 1970-2007, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | William and Lucy L'Engle, 1969-2008, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | Houghton Cranford Smith, 1969-2006, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 12-13 | E. Ambrose Webster, 1990s-2001, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 14-16 | Various Artists, 1980s-1990s |
| Box 1, Folder 17-21 | Teaching Lectures, A&D 382, Purdue University , 1960s-1980s |
| Box 2, Folder 1-2 | Teaching Notes and Materials, Provincetown Art Association , 1990s-2006 |
| Box 2, Folder 3-4 | Teaching Notes and Research, "Art Since 1945," A&D 384, Purdue University , 1960s-1980s |
| Box 2, Folder 5-6 | Teaching Notes and Research, Miscellaneous , 1950s-1999, undated |
| Box 2, Folder 7 | Teaching Notes and Research, Purdue University, 1960s-1980s |
| Box 2 | By Others |
| Box 2, Folder 8-12 | Art History Textbook, Manuscript and Notes, 1978-1979, undated |
| Box 2, Folder 13 | "A History of the Reputation of the Duke of Marlborough," by John P. Sedgewick, Jr., 1947 |
| Box 2, Folder 14 | Miscellaneous Writings by Others, 1971-1994, undated |

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Series 4: Subject Files, 1954-2006*0.7 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3)*

Subject files containing correspondence, printed materials, and notes and writings reflect Vevers' activities and interests. Many files concern Provincetown artists, history, galleries, and exhibitions.

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|--------------------|---|
| Box 2, Folder 15 | African Art, 1970s-1980s, undated |
| Box 2, Folder 16 | Beneker, Gaeritt Albertus, 2003 |
| Box 2, Folder 17 | Book Proposal, Provincetown Art, circa 2001-2002, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 1 | City Center Gallery, 1954, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 2 | The Development of Provincetown's Art Colony, 1980-2006, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 3 | Elder Hostel, 1990s, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 4 | "Forum 49" (1949-1999), circa 1980s-1990s, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 5 | Hawthorne, Charles Webster, 1980s-2002, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 6 | The Hotchkiss School, 1970s-1990s, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 7 | Kusama, Yayoi, 1993-1994, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 8-10 | Long Point Gallery, 1959-1990s, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 11 | Maclver, Loren, 1987-2003, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 12 | Obituaries and Eulogies, 1980s-1990s, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 13 | Poetry and Music, circa 1970s-2004, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 14 | Provincetown Art Association and Museum (1926-1990s) , 1980s-2002, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 15 | "Provincetown Prospects, the Work of Hans Hofmann and His Students" (1994) , 1994 |
| Box 3, Folder 16 | "Tony Vevers: A Retrospective of 35 Years Work," Greater Lafayette Art Museum and Provincetown Art Association and Museum (1986) , 1986 |
| Box 3, Folder 17 | UGA Studies Abroad, 1980s |
| Box 3, Folder 18 | Vevers Family Exhibitions (Elspeth Halvorsen, Tabitha Vevers, Tony Vevers) , 1960s-1992, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 19 | Wilson, Edmund, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 20 | The WPA Artists of Provincetown (1929-1937), 1996-1997, undated |

Box 3, Folder 21

Yasunas Exhibition, 1991-1994, undated

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Series 5: Printed Materials, 1960s-2008

0.7 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4)

Printed materials include exhibition catalogs, announcements, and clippings noting Vevers and his work. Other clippings and catalogs relate to Vevers's art interests; some may relate to teaching and contemplated writings.

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| Box 3, Folder 22 | Clippings, Miscellaneous, 1960s-2004, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 23 | Clippings, Provincetown, circa 1970s-2008, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 24 | Clippings, Vevers, 1960s-2008, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 25 | Exhibition Catalogs, Provincetown Art Association and Museum , 1978-1997 |
| Box 4, Folder 1 | Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, Miscellaneous , 1960s-2004, undated |
| Box 4, Folder 2 | Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, Tony Vevers, 1950s-2008 |
| Box 4, Folder 3 | Lecture Announcements, 1969-1990s, undated |

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Series 6: Artwork, circa 1950s-circa 2005

2 Folders (Box 4)

Artwork consists of a small watercolor and a print probably by Vevers, as well as a pen-and-ink portrait of a male by an unidentified artist.

Box 4, Folder 4 By Tony Vevers (?), circa 1950s-circa 2005

Box 4, Folder 5 By Unidentified Artist, circa 1970s-1990s

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Series 7: Photographs, circa 1950s-1984

0.1 Linear feet (Box 4)

Included are photographs of works of art by Vevers; photographs of the Sun Gallery in Provincetown including an exterior view of the gallery, exhibition installations, and gallery artists. Installations include: "Children's Art" (1955), "City Show" (1958), Red Grooms (1958), Alex Katz (1958), and "Carnival Show" (1959). Artists shown are: Yvonne Andersen, Dominic Falcone, Red Grooms, Taro and Gwen Yamamoto. Photographs of Vevers show him as a young boy (digital print) and at work in his studio.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Box 4, Folder 6 | Artwork by Vevers, circa 1950s-1960s |
| Box 4, Folder 7; Box 4 | Sun Gallery (Yvonne Andersen, photographer), 1959, undated |
| Box 4, Folder 8 | Tony Vevers (circa 1929-circa 1930), 1984, undated |

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