



Smithsonian

National Museum of African Art

Jerry Thompson Collection

Haley Steinhilber

June 2022

Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
National Museum of African Art
P.O. Box 37012
MRC 708
Washington, DC 20013-7012
elisofonarchives@si.edu
<https://africa.si.edu/collection/eliot-elisofon-photographic-archives/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Content Description.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
Title:	Jerry Thompson Collection
Date:	ca. 1980
Identifier:	EEPA.2017-002
Creator:	Thompson, Jerry L., 1945 (Photographer)
Extent:	1 Book 86 Transparencies (8 x 10 in) 206 Negatives (8 x 10 in) 196 Prints (8 x 10 in) 1 Slide (35 mm)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated by Jerry Thompson, 2017

Related Materials

This collection is related to the objects in the National Museum of African Art's Walt Disney-Tishman African Art Collection.

Preferred Citation

Jerry Thompson Collection, EEPA 2017-002, Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Conditions Governing Use

Permission to reproduce images from the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives must be obtained in advance. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical / Historical

Jerry L. Thompson was born in Houston, Texas in 1945. He studied at the University of Texas and Yale University from 1972 to 1975, where he served as Walker Evans' principal assistant. From 1973 to 1980, Thompson was a member of the faculty of Yale University. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1977) and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation (also in 1977).

Thompson has worked as a professional photographer since 1973. His work includes portraits from the Coney Island amusement park of the early 1970s and street work in New York City neighborhoods, but he is best known as a photographer of sculpture. He began photographing sculpture in the mid-1970s. His first

major project was to photograph the African works in the collection of the Museum of Primitive Art in New York City. In the early 1980s, Thompson began work for the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC). Under the direction of Lewis I. Sharp, curator of American sculpture and administrator of the American Wing, Thompson served as photographer-in-residence, photographing all the American works of sculpture in the museum's collection. He has also done extensive photography documenting the sculpture of Erastus Dow Palmer, Frederic Remington, John Quincy Adams Ward, and Augustus Saint-Gaudens. His work on the two latter sculptors included their major outdoor public monuments.

Initially in his career, Thompson used black-and-white 8x10 inch negatives, but eventually began to work with color transparency materials as well. Thompson has written several books, including "The Last Years of Walker Evans," (1997) published by Thames and Hudson, "Truth and Photography" (2003) published by Ivan R. Dee, and "Why Photography Matters," (2013), published by MIT Press.

Content Description

Collection contains transparencies, negatives, prints, and slides that depict the Paul and Ruth Tishman collection at a Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition, circa 1980, and (1) copy of the book "For Spirits and Kings: African Art from the Tishman Collection" (1981), edited by Susan Vogel.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art objects
Tishman, Paul