



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Michael Cipriano Papers

NMAH.AC.1274

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Michael Cipriano Papers
Date:	1979-1993, undated
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1274
Creator:	Cipriano, Michael, 1960-1993
Extent:	0.6 Cubic feet (4 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Collection documents the work of display and window designer Michael Cipriano for Connecticut and New York stores including sketches, business records, correspondence, and photographic materials.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was donated in 1993 by D. Thomas Shoemaker.

Provenance

Transferred to the Archives Center from the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in 2012.

Related Materials

Materials at the Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Hills Bros. Coffee Company, Incorporated Records, NMAH.AC.0395

Estelle Ellis Papers, NMAH.AC.0423

Beverly Partridge Shopping Bag Collection, NMAH.AC.0493

Edward J. Orth Memorial Archives of the New York World's Fair, NMAH.AC.0560

Archives Center Shopping Bag Collection, NMAH.AC.0570

Dorothy Shaver Papers, NMAH.AC.0631

Landy R. Hales Papers, NMAH.AC.0906

Gene Moore, Tiffany & Company Photographs, NMAH.AC.1280

William L. Bird Holidays on Display Collection, NMAH.AC.1288

Processing Information

Collection processed by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, archivist, 2023. Finding aid encoded by Audrey Willius, intern, 2023.

Preferred Citation

Michael Cipriano Papers, 1979-1993, undated, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Contact the Archives Center for information at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270.

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Biographical / Historical

Michael Louis Cipriano (August 10, 1960–October 8, 1993) was born in Waterbury, New Haven, Connecticut to Michael Cipriano (1940–) and Evelyn M. Piperas (1941–2013). He studied fine art and art history at the University of Connecticut. His professional interests included costume, set, and theater design of the Art Deco, Art Moderne, and Art Nouveau styles. Prior to 1983, he did freelance displays for small shops in Connecticut. Cipriano began his professional career as a display trimmer for Macy's department store in New York in 1983. He designed for Bloomingdale's Incorporated from 1984–85, and for Bergdorf Goodman Incorporated Home Department from 1985 to 1986. Cipriano died of complications from AIDS in 1993 in New York City at the age of thirty-three.

Scope and Contents

The collection documents Cipriano's short professional career as a table setter and window designer for retailers in Connecticut and New York City. It consists of business records, correspondence, photographs, and colored pencil sketches for Barney's Christmas windows dating from 1988–1989. In addition, there are approximately five hundred color 35mm slides documenting window displays for Macy's Incorporated, Bloomingdale's Incorporated, Bergdorf Goodman Incorporated, and Barneys New York. The collection covers the full range of Cipriano's design career from 1983 to 1993.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into two series:

Series 1: Photographic Materials, 1979–1991, undated

Series 2: Client Files, 1982–1993, undated

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Chelsea Passage
Display of merchandise -- United States
Show windows

Table setting and decoration

Types of Materials:

- Advertising cards
- Clippings
- Color prints (photographs) -- 20th century
- Color slides
- Color xerographic copies
- Correspondence
- Drawings
- Invoices
- Obituaries
- Proposals
- Purchase orders
- Receipts
- Sketches
- Swatches

Names:

- Barneys New York
- Bergdorf Goodman (New York, N.Y.)
- Bloomingdale's (Firm)
- Cooper-Hewitt Design Archive
- Ercole (Store)
- Etoile (Store)
- Kosta Boda (Firm)
- Macy, R.H., & Co., New York
- Puiforcat (Firm)

Occupations:

- Window display designers

Preferred Titles:

- Bride's (Magazine)*

Container Listing

Series 1: Photographs Materials, 1979-1991, undated

Scope and Contents: Consists primarily of slides and black and white and color prints of table settings, window displays, and floor sets created by Cipriano for major department stores. The materials are arranged first in alphabetical order by the name of the store. Materials were then maintained in the sets that were previously created. There are a few images of designs created for unidentified stores in Connecticut. In addition, there are a few images that could not be identified at the end.

Box 1	Barneys New York, Chelsea Passage, table settings, undated
Box 1	Barneys New York, Chelsea Passage, window displays, undated
Box 1	Bergdorf Goodman Incorporated, selling floor and table settings, undated
Box 1	Bergdorf Goodman Incorporated, windows, undated
Box 1	Bergdorf Goodman Incorporated, windows, 58th Street, New York, New York, undated
Box 1	Macy's Incorporated, windows, undated
Box 1	Puiforcat, window displays, Madison Avenue, New York, New York, undated
Box 1	Slide box number 1, undated
Box 1	Slide box number 2, undated
Box 1	Slide box number 3, undated
Box 1	Slide box number 4, undated
Box 2	Slide box number 5, undated
Box 2	Slide box number 6, undated
Box 2	Slide box number 7, undated
Box 2	Slide box number 8, undated
Box 2	Slide box number 9, undated
Box 2	Slide box number 10, undated

Box 2	Slide box number 11, undated
Box 2	Slide box number 12, undated
Box 2	Slide box number 13, undated
Box 2	Slide box number 14, undated
Box 3	Slide box number 15, 1983-1984, undated
Box 3	Slide box number 16, undated
Box 3	Slide box number 17, undated
Box 3	Slide box number 18, undated
Box 3	Slide box number 19, undated
Box 3	Slide box number 20, undated
Box 3	Slide box number 21, 1986, undated
Box 3	Slide box number 22, 1983, undated
Box 3	Slide box number 23, 1991
Box 3	Slide box number 24, 1983-1984
Box 3	Connecticut window displays, unidentified stores, 1979, undated
Box 3	Macy's Incorporated window displays, 1983 August
Box 3	Unidentified slides, undated

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Series 2: Client Files, 1982-1993, undated

Scope and Contents: Contains information about Cipriano's designs for department stores. These materials provide context and the thought process behind his designs, requirements for each job, and sometimes compensation for the work. In addition, there is information relating to the various businesses he worked with to acquire materials for the designs. Lastly, there is a copy the resume he used to acquire work, correspondence, newspaper clippings relating to his professional life, and an image of his home. Materials are arranged in chronological order.

Box 4	Resume, 1982
Box 4	Chelsea Passage, Barneys New York, 1985-1990
Box 4	Ercole, New York, 1987
Box 4	Barneys New York, 1987-1990
Box 4	Bride's Magazine, 1988
Box 4	Chelsea Passage, Christmas, Barneys New York, 1988
Box 4	Puiforcat, 1988-1991
Box 4	Chelsea Passage, Christmas, Barneys New York, 1989
Box 4	Kosta Boda, 1989
Box 4	Barneys New York, 1990
Box 4	Chelsea Passage, Barneys New York, 1990
Box 4	Puiforcat, 1990
Box 4	Bride's Magazine, 1991
Box 4	Chelsea Passage, Barneys New York, 1991
Box 4	Puiforcat, 1991
Box 4	Etoile display, 1991
Box 4	Correspondence, 1992
Box 4	Newspaper clippings, 1992-1993, undated
Box 4	Image of Cipriano's home, 1993

Box 4 Display photographs, undated

Box 4 Etoile, undated

Box 4 Puiforcat window prints, undated

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