



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Saul Nesbitt Papers

NMAH.AC.1275

NMAH Staff

Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
archivescenter@si.edu
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Arrangement.....	3
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	3
Names and Subjects	3
Container Listing	5

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Saul Nesbitt Papers
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1275
Date:	1951-1984
Extent:	3.5 Cubic feet
Source:	Cooper-Hewitt Design Archives Nesbitt, Saul, 1920-1993.
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Collection donated by the designer's wife, Mrs. Saul Nesbitt, in 1994.

Provenance

The collection was transferred to the Archives Center in 2012.

Processing Information

Collection is unprocessed.

Preferred Citation

Saul Nesbitt Papers, 1951-1984, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

Collection open for research on site by appointment. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Packaging, industrial, and graphic designer. Born in New York City, August 10, 1920. Nesbitt was a student of sculptor Chaim Gross and studied art at many New York institutions including: Art Students League; New York University; Columbia University; Pratt Institute of Art; and the New School.

He served in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1945 where he worked as a cartographer and as the head of the visual aid section in a military intelligence training center. In 1945, he joined the staff of Harper's Bazaar magazine where he was an illustrator assisting art director Alexey Brodovich. In 1946, Nesbitt was hired by the industrial design studio of Raymond Loewy as a handletterer and packaging designer.

He worked with Lippincott Industrial Design from 1948 to 1951. Nesbitt opened his own design studio, Nesbitt Associates, Ltd. in 1951. The firm specialized in package design, trademarks, and corporate identities. Some of his most recognizable designs were for the label for Campbell's Soup and the Florists' Telegraph Delivery (F.T.D.) Winged Mercury 'Interflora' figure, still used today. Nesbitt's other clients included: Franco American; Revlon; Ballantine Beer; Borden; Champion spark plugs; Kodak; Philip Morris cigarettes; Schick razors; and Archway cookies. In addition, Nesbitt developed the "Karry Kit" for Ballantine Beer which came to be widely used and known as the six pack.

Nesbitt was known for his revealing studies and surveys of the buying needs and preferences of the "average American housewife" and consumers in general. His opinions on what he referred to as "underpackaging" were widely publicized in professional magazines and journals. In 1984, Nesbitt retired from the design field and went to California to resume his career as a sculptor until his death in 1993.

Scope and Contents

Background and biographical information consists of Nesbitt's resume, an artist/designer statement, list of clients and accomplishments of Nesbitt Associates, Ltd., press releases, articles, and photographs of the designer. The materials in this collection document Nesbitt's work from 1951 through 1984.

Scope and Contents

The records of the office of public relations cover the years 1955-1963 and include press releases and clippings describing some Nesbitt's products, his theories on consumer motivation, and the results of his surveys, as well as correspondence with members of the press. General office correspondence is boxed separately.

Scope and Contents

Color slides, color and black & white transparencies, and black & white photographs of most of Nesbitt's designs for packaging from 1951-1981 are included. Oversized materials include books jackets and booklets designed by Nesbitt, as well as some renderings for packaging designs done in color.

Scope and Contents

Three samples of fitted presentation boxes designed by Nesbitt are included, as well as a prototype for a design award for Parsons School of Design in New York, and two "Multiplication" cubes commissioned by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Arrangement

This collection has been reboxed in archivally-sound containers, but the materials have only been partially processed and arranged. Record groups include: 1) Background and Biographical Information; 2) Records of the Public Relations Office, 1955-1963; 3) Correspondence; 4) Slides, Transparencies, and Photographs; 5) Oversized Materials; and 6) Samples.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Consumers -- Research
- Consumers' preferences -- United States
- Corporate image -- Design
- Design, Industrial -- United States
- Graphic arts -- United States
- Housewives as consumers
- Labels -- Design
- Logos (Symbols) -- Design
- Packaging -- Design

Types of Materials:

- Blueprints
- Client lists
- Clippings
- Correspondence
- Drawings
- Media lists
- Photographs -- 20th century
- Press releases
- Sketches
- Slides
- Transparencies

Names:

- Archway Cookies, Inc.
- Borden's Farm Products Co. of Illinois
- Campbell Soup Company
- Cooper-Hewitt Design Archive
- Cooper-Hewitt Design Archives

Eastman Kodak Company
Florists' Telegraph Delivery Association
Franco American Food Co.
Lever Brothers and Unilever, Ltd.
National Distillers and Chemical Corporation
Nesbitt Associates, Ltd.
P. Ballantine & Sons
Philip Morris Incorporated
Revlon, Inc.
Schick (Firm)
Scott Paper Company
Seagram Company

Occupations:

Graphic designers
Industrial designers
Packaging designers

Container Listing

Box 1	Files
Box 2	Files
Box 3	Files, 1955 - 1957
Box 4	Files, 1957 - 1960
Box 5	Files, 1960 - 1963
Box 6	Biographical information, black and white photographs
Box 7	Black and white photographs
Box 8	Transparencies
Box 9	Negatives, objects
Box 10	Objects
Box 11	Drawings (oversize)