

1960 Venice Biennale Exhibition Records.

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Archives and Manuscripts Collections, The Baltimore Museum of Art

2017

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Summary Information

Repository	Archives and Manuscripts Collections, The Baltimore Museum of Art
Creator	Breskin, Adelyn Dohme, 1896-1986
Creator	Rosenthal, Gertrude, 1903-1989
Title	1960 Venice Biennale Exhibition Records.
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1960
Date [inclusive]	1954-1961.
Extent	1.25 Linear feet (4 boxes, 1 oversize box)
Language	English
Language of Materials	The majority of materials are in English. Some documents are in Italian, French, and German.
Abstract	The 1960 Venice Biennale Exhibition Records contain letters, photographs, press clippings, donation information, pamphlets, and publications relating to role of the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) in commissioning the United States Pavilion in the 30th Venice Biennale in 1960. The BMA's director Adelyn Breskin and senior curator Gertrude Rosenthal organized an exhibition in the Pavilion of works by artists Hans Hofmann, Franz Kline, Philip Guston, and Theodore Roszak.

Preferred Citation

1960 Venice Biennale Exhibition Records, Archives and Manuscripts Collections, The Baltimore
Museum of Art

Biographical Information

Venice Biennale

The Venice Biennale is a biennial contemporary art exhibition held in Venice, Italy. The first Biennale was held in 1895 and had 224,000 visitors. By 1914 seven countries other than Italy had established their own pavilions in the Giardini di Castello, where the exhibition was held. In 1930 the Grand Central Art Galleries constructed the United States Pavilion which they owned and operated until 1954, when they sold it to the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) who withdrew from participation in 1964, selling it to the United States Information Agency. As of 2017 the United States Pavilion was owned by the Guggenheim Foundation. The BMA has represented the United States in the Venice Biennale twice. First in 1960 under director Adelyn Breeskin and senior curator Gertrude Rosenthal the BMA exhibited the works of artists Franz Kline, Hans Hofmann, Philip Guston, and Theodore Roszak. Second, in 2017 under director Christopher Bedford and senior programming and research curator Katy Siegel in collaboration with the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, the United States Pavilion exhibited the work of Mark Bradford.

Adelyn Breeskin

Breeskin (1896-1986) was born in Baltimore, Maryland. She was the director of the BMA from 1942 to 1962. During her tenure as director of the BMA she served as the commissioner of the American delegation to the Venice Biennale. She also negotiated the donation of the Cone Collection to the BMA. She left the BMA in 1962 to head the Washington Gallery of Modern Art.

Gertrude Rosenthal

Rosenthal (1903-1989) was the senior curator at the BMA at the time of the 1960 Venice Biennale. Born and raised in Germany, Rosenthal moved from England to the United States in 1940, where she lived until her death in 1989. Before working at the BMA, Rosenthal was the Art Librarian at Goucher College.

Hans Hofmann

Hofmann (1880-1966) was born in Germany and began his career as an artist there. In 1933 he moved to New York where he interacted with some of the most prominent artists of his time. He was integral in the development of Abstract Expressionism in America after World War II.

Theodore Roszak

Roszak (1907-1981) was born in Poland and emigrated to Chicago with his family in 1909. Roszak was originally a painter but switched his focus to sculpture in the early 1930s. He was interested in Constructivism and Surrealism and was influenced by an industrial aesthetic. During World War II he designed aircraft and taught aircraft mechanics. In 1951 he began showing at solo exhibitions and participating in major exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale in 1960.

Philip Guston

Guston (1913-1980) was a painter and part of the New York School of abstract expressionists. In the late 1960s Guston moved past Abstract Expressionism towards what he called Neo-expressionism, which was more representational in nature.

Franz Kline

Kline (1910-1962) was an American painter also integral in the creation of Abstract Expressionism. Kline is best known for his black and white abstract paintings.

Scope and Contents

The 1960 Venice Biennale Exhibition Records contain letters, photographs, press clippings, donation information, pamphlets, and publications relating to role of the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) in commissioning the United States Pavilion in the 30th Venice Biennale in 1960. The BMA's director Adelyn Breeskin and senior curator Gertrude Rosenthal organized an exhibition in the Pavilion of works by artists Hans Hofmann, Franz Kline, Philip Guston, and Theodore Roszak.

The Artist Information folder consists of exhibition pamphlets, press clippings about the artists and their work, and biographies created by the BMA for publicity purposes. The collection also contains several letters from Hans Hofmann's wife, Miz Wolfegg, relating to exhibition preparations, organizing another European exhibition, and concerns about the preservation needs of one of Hofmann's paintings.

The General Correspondence folders include letters to magazines and newspapers asking them to cover the United States Pavilion and invitations to both Gertrude Rosenthal and Adelyn Breeskin to attend social events while they were in Venice. It also includes invitations from Rosenthal and Breeskin to important art world figures, diplomats, and personal friends, asking them to attend the Biennale. Correspondence between BMA staff members regarding exhibition logistics is also included in general correspondence.

The Preliminary Arrangements folders contain information about selection of works to be included in the exhibition; hiring of Italian staff to oversee the exhibition; arrangements to obtain a Maryland state flag to fly at the United States Pavilion; obtaining the necessary stickers and labels for shipping; making repairs to the Pavilion; information about the organization, writing, and printing of the exhibition catalog; and information about the dimensions of the works of art and specifications for their display.

The majority of the photographs in the Venice Biennale Exhibition Records are of paintings and sculptures that were exhibited at the Biennale. However there are also several photographs of the United States Pavilion in Venice as well as photographs of unidentified people.

The Loan Requests, Refused and Loan Requests, Granted folders contain information about the paintings and sculptures that the BMA requested to borrow from museums, galleries, private collections, and the artists themselves. The refused requests consist of loan request letters and responses explaining why the requests cannot be granted. The two folders containing granted requests include letters, loan agreement forms, and lists of lenders and objects being loaned.

The Donations and Fundraising folders contain information about financing the Biennale project: letters from the BMA requesting donations, letters from donors specifying the amounts they would like to donate, and note cards that record the names of donors, their addresses, and the amounts they donated.

The Packing, Transportation, and Insurance folders include letters between the BMA and Santini Brothers, the New York City packing company that packed all of the works of art for travel. These letters include logistics for getting the works to New York, how they would be packed, and their return to their owners after the exhibition. The folders also contain information about American Export Lines' donation of space on their ship, and details about how the works would be handled once they arrived in Italy. Information about insurance during shipment and during the exhibition is also in this folder.

Exhibition Details includes a list of items for sale at the exhibition, a guest book, information about the assembly of Roszak's "Cradle Song," and a layout of the United States Pavilion.

Budget and Expenses contains several preliminary budgets, a budget for the closing of the exhibition, a receipt from the printing of the Biennale catalog, a notebook detailing Rosenthal's expenses while she was in Venice, and some of her receipts.

Publications, Pamphlets, and Bulletins, contains copies of the Biennale catalog for the United States Pavilion; a pamphlet detailing the regulations governing the Biennale; official bulletins from the Biennale detailing changes to the rules and regulations, official schedules, invitations, and a list of the foreign delegations and their commissioners; and press releases from the BMA about the museum's involvement with the Biennale.

Press Clippings includes articles from magazines, newspapers, and journals both domestic and international. Some are only tangentially related to the Venice Biennale and the BMA's involvement in it. The BMA used a press clipping service to track media coverage of the Biennale and the United States Pavilion. This service used keywords, such as Venice, Biennale, and the names of the artists representing the United States, and sent all clippings containing those subjects. The clippings in this collection are both from the press clipping service and from local sources.

Loan Return Receipts contains forms completed by lenders when returning works loaned for the Biennale exhibition. These forms are attached to copies of the BMA's original loan receipt which detail the condition of the objects when received by the BMA before the exhibition.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Archives and Manuscripts Collections, The Baltimore Museum of Art 2017

Restrictions on Use

The 1960 Venice Biennale Exhibition Records are the physical property of the Archives and Manuscripts Collections, The Baltimore Museum of Art. Copyright, except in cases where material has passed into the public domain, belongs to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult a Library staff member.

Provenance

Transferred from the Registration Department in 2014.

Processing Information

Processed by Clare Kuntz in 2017.

The archivist arranged the collection based on original order and the titles of the original folders, which were Biennale 1960, Biennale 1960 - General, Venice Biennale 1960, Venice Biennale: XXX 1960 6/15-10/15 American Representation Receipts, Venice Biennale: XXX 1960 6/15-10/15 Publicity, Biennale 1960 Packing and Transportation, Venice Biennale: XXX 1960 6/15-10/15 Preliminary Arrangements, Biennale Loan Requests 1960 Refused, Biennale Loan Requests 1960 Granted. The folders are arranged in roughly chronological order.

Related Materials

Location of Associated Material

The Gertrude Rosenthal Papers contain travel diaries from Rosenthal's time in Venice during the Biennale. The Marketing and Communications Department Records contain one folder of correspondence and press releases related to publicity. The Exhibitions Photographs Collection contain several folders of photographs of works in the exhibition as well as the installation and events. The Audiovisual Collection contains one motion picture film of the Commissioner's Party at Peggy Guggenheim's villa in Venice: <http://cdm15264.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16075coll3/id/56>.

Separated Materials

Five folders are located in an oversize box: folders 3-6 of Press Clippings and Maps of Venice.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Biennale di Venezia.

Genre(s)

- Articles
- Budgets
- Correspondence
- Guest books
- Invitations
- Photographs

Geographic Name(s)

- Venice (Italy)

Personal Name(s)

- Guston, Philip, 1913-1980
- Hofmann, Hans, 1880-1966
- Kline, Franz, 1910-1962
- Roszak, Theodore, 1907-1981

Subject(s)

- Abstract expressionism--United States
- Art, Modern--20th Century--Exhibitions
- Exhibition catalogs
- Exhibition openings
- Painting, American
- Sculpture

Collection Inventory

	Box
Artist Information. 1960.	1
General Correspondence. 1959-1961. 2.0 folders	1
Preliminary Arrangements. 1958-1960.	1
Photographs. circa 1960.	1
Loan Requests, Refused. 1960.	1
Loan Requests, Granted. 1960. 2.0 folders	1
Donations and Fundraising. 1960. 4.0 folders	2
Packing, Transportation, and Insurance. 1954-1961. (Bulk, 1960)	2
Exhibition Details. 1960.	3
Budget and Expenses. 1960.	3
Publications, Pamphlets, and Bulletins. 1960. 2.0 folders	3
Press Clippings. 1960. 6.0 folders	

	Box
Mixed materials	3
	Box
Mixed materials	OS1
	Box
Maps of Venice. circa 1960.	OS1
Thank You Letters. 1960.	4
Loan Return Reciepts. 1960-1961. 2.0 folders	4