

Virginia Banks papers

Inventory

Accession No: 2602-002

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Guide to the Virginia Banks Papers

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University of Washington Libraries
Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives
Banks, Virginia.
VIRGINIA BANKS PAPERS
1934-1981
7 cubic feet
Papers, Photographs, Artwork and Film
Acc. No. 2602-002

BIOGRAPHY

Virginia Banks (1920 – 1985) was a well-known Northwest artist based in Seattle. Born in Norwood, Massachusetts, she received her bachelors degree from Smith College in 1941, and a master of arts from the University of Iowa in 1944. Banks married psychiatrist Arthur W. Freidinger in January 1946 and moved with him to Seattle in 1948. She resided in various North American states in the period 1952-1958, including Massachusetts, Iowa, Virginia and Connecticut. She held major exhibitions at galleries in New York City, including the Grand Central Moderns during this time.

Virginia Banks returned to Seattle in 1958, and became part of the art scene which included artist Mark Tobey and gallery owners Otto Seligman and Zoe Dusanne. Banks held shows of her work in Seattle at museums and galleries including the Seattle Art Museum and the Foster/White Gallery, while continuing to exhibit on the East coast. She created paintings in watercolor and oils, and also worked with graphic media and collage. Her influences included Northwest Indian and Near Eastern art, as well as the work of contemporary figures such as Mark Tobey.

Banks taught art for much of her career, working at schools including the State University of Iowa (1942-47), the University of Buffalo, New York (1947-48), and the Cornish Art School in Seattle, Washington (1951-52). Virginia Banks died at her home in Seattle on February 7, 1985.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Virginia Banks Papers comprise 7 cubic feet of records, spanning the period 1934-1981. The papers reflect Banks' work as an artist, and also her relations with family and friends and colleagues in the art world.

Incoming letters are arranged alphabetically by correspondent, and contain evidence of Banks' contacts and dealings with art galleries and museums both in Seattle and on the East coast. These include the Grand Central Art Gallery in New York City, the Foster/White Gallery in Seattle and the Seattle Art Museum. Many letters contain specific details regarding exhibit arrangement for Banks' work, and often contain details of the titles and cost of pieces displayed at different exhibitions. A significant number relate to her 'one-man' shows in New York during the 1950s. A 1953 letter from gallery owner Zoe Dusanne discusses sales of Banks' work, and one from Otto Seligman concerns arrangements for an exhibition in 1959. Letters reflect also Banks' association with the Foster/White Gallery between 1977 and 1983.

A large amount of correspondence is personal or social in nature. Banks' sister, Otilie Mildred Banks, and friends Mary Almart, Zella May Case, Betty Lou Dingwall, Bill Hancock and Erna S. Tilley are major correspondents. Incoming letters spanning the period 1960-81 reflect Banks' close friendship with the artist Windsor Utley and his wife Josephine. Some of these contain

evidence of 'Windsor's Castle', constructed in 1964-65 on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, and designed by Utley and architect John Di Casti.

Correspondence from artist colleagues including Mark Tobey, Guy Anderson and Windsor Utley, together with poet Theodore Roethke, consists of a few scattered items only. Letters from higher education institutes including the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy and the State University of Iowa reflect also Banks' work as an art instructor from ca. 1948-1958.

Outgoing correspondence is arranged chronologically. Although the majority of letters are to family members and friends, some of the early letters document Banks' applications for college and for teaching positions. A great many of the letters from the 1950s are addressed to Elena Serton and Colette Roberts at the Grand Central Gallery in New York, and concern arrangements for Banks' exhibitions, including lists of titles, and prices. These include some of Banks' commentary on specific works. Letters to Lynn Lagerstrom at the Grand Central Moderns in 1950 contain commentary on Banks work, and discuss Tobey's reactions to her work. A large amount of correspondence from the 1960s and 1970s documents Bank's relations with family members, including her sister Otilie Banks. Her involvement with the Seattle art scene during this period is reflected also in letters documenting the Seattle art community, and individuals such as gallery owner Zoe Dusanne.

'Lists, Exhibits and Exhibitions' include lists of artworks exhibited at galleries including the Grand Central Moderns (1952) in New York, and the Foster/White Gallery (1980) and the Zoe Dusanne Gallery in Seattle.

The accession contains ephemera relating to a broad range of exhibitions displaying Banks' work. This includes programs, brochures and listings of artwork for shows at the Grand Central Moderns (1950s and 1962), the Foster/White Gallery (1952) and the Seattle Art Museum (1983). The series includes biographical information for Virginia Banks, and various reviews of her art exhibitions in New York.

Two Studio Books document sales of Banks' artwork, listing title of work sold, name of collector, agent, and some prices during the period 1958-1981. Financial records dated 1952-1980 include sales receipts, also with some prices for Banks' work.

Speeches and writings include Banks' college and teaching notes, and also some writings about art composition and history. The series includes a paper entitled, 'Reflections of Mark Tobey's teachings' (1978), describing some aspects of the Seattle art scene from her arrival onwards, and Tobey's influence on her work. Reviews of Banks' work in the 1950s are also included.

The accession contains photographs of Banks' work spanning the period ca. 1937-63, the majority of which are dated and titled. Scrapbooks contain clippings, programs and some photographs reflecting Banks' work through the period ca. 1940-1980. Clippings contain also various art-related articles and also reviews of Banks' work, spanning the period ca. 1945-1982. There are also three folders containing sketches and drawings by Banks (1960-62) and a folder of her Christmas card designs (1936-1965).

Both incoming correspondence and art-related ephemera contain material relating to the World's Fair held in Seattle in 1962. Letters contain evidence of the loan of Banks' work, 'Shadows of Folding Postcards' for inclusion in an exhibition of Northwestern art at the 21st Century Exposition. Papers in ephemera also indicate Banks' role as chairman of the Exhibit Programs Committee for the American Association for the United Nations Exhibit (Seattle Chapter).

The accession contains three subject-related series. The first contains papers regarding the Seattle Chapter of the Artists' Equity Association, of which Banks and artists including Mark Tobey were members. These reflect the founding of the chapter in 1950 and the aims of the organization. The second subject series contains various reviews and biographical information sent by Banks to Gloria B. Peck for incorporation in G.G. Albi and Gloria B. Peck. *The Artists of the Puget Sound* (1962). A third subject series reflects community-related meetings and social events in the 'Laurelhurst Neighborhood', where Banks was resident with her husband Arthur Freidinger from 1958 onwards.

The accession reflects Banks' continuing association with the schools and colleges she attended, and includes correspondence and ephemera relating in particular to Dana Hall School in Wellesley, Massachusetts. A separate subgroup has been created for papers relating to the Smith College Club of Seattle. These reflect Banks' involvement in fundraising and social activities with Smith College alumni from the 1950s through the 1970s. The subgroup has been processed to the series level and includes correspondence, newsletters and publications.

Related materials held at the University of Washington Libraries include an oral history interview with Virginia Banks, conducted by Bill Hoppe in May 1974 (*Accession Number 2602-001*). This contains Banks' reflections on the art scene in Seattle during the 1950s, and discussion of the life and work of individuals including Mark Tobey, Otto Seligman and Zoe Dusanne.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Virginia Banks Papers were donated to University of Washington Libraries' Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives by the Virginia Banks Estate in February 1988. The accession was processed in 2000.

The Virginia Banks Papers are open to all users.

Creator's literary rights were transferred to the University of Washington Libraries.

VIRGINIA BANKS PAPERS
Accession No. 2602-2

INVENTORY

<u>Box/Folders</u>		<u>Dates</u>
1/1	BIOGRAPHICAL FEATURES	n.d.
	INCOMING LETTERS	
1/2	Miscellaneous Family Members	1950-80; n.d.
1/3	Albrizio, Sonia	1974-80
1/4-6	Allmart, Mary	1956-82; n.d.
1/7	Altschul, Marilyn Bender	1969-77
1/8	American Federation of Arts	1946-47
1/9	Anderson, Guy	n.d.
1/10	Associated American Artists	1946-47
1/11-13	Banks, Otilie M.	1952-77; n.d.
1/14	Barnett, Virginia	1978
1/15	Bekins Moving and Storage Company	1972-75
1/16	Benda, Lie	1950-56
1/17	Bendrat, R.V.	1952
1/18	Bentley, Jane and Richard	1952-81
1/19	Beverage, Samuel	1970-82; n.d.
1/20	Bigelow Office Supply Company, The Little Gallery	1964
1/21	Boston Museum of Fine Arts	1947
1/22	Brandeis University National Women's Committee, Seattle Chapter	1960-62
1/23	Brazeau, Wendell	1963
1/24	Brooklyn Museum	1947
1/25	Buffalo Fine Arts Academy	1947-48; n.d.
1/26	Caleb Printing Company	1952-53
1/27	Carnegie Institute, Department of Fine Arts	1949
1/28	Case, Zella May	1950-84
1/29	Century 21 Exposition (1962: Seattle, WA)	1962
1/30	Collector's Gallery	1965-69
1/31	Colorado Springs Fine Arts Academy	1945-46
1/32	Comly, Mary Ellen	1956-77
1/33	Cornell University, Andrew Dickinson White Museum of Art	1968
1/34	Cornish Institute of Allied Arts	1951-78; n.d.
1/35	Dana Hall School	1950-83; n.d.
1/36-37	Dingwall, Betty Lou	1964-83
1/38	Durst, David	1947-54; n.d.
1/39	Dusanne, Zoe	1953, 1959
1/40	Elshin, Jacob	1970; n.d.
1/41	Fisherman, Rebecca	1952-80
1/42	Flett, James and Meta	1950-67
1/43	Foster/White Gallery	1977-81; n.d.
1/44	Freidinger, Arthur W.	1961-82; n.d.
1/45	Gonzales, Xavier	1952
1/46-48	Grand Central Art Galleries	1948-77

<u>Box/Folders</u>		<u>Dates</u>
	INCOMING LETTERS (cont.)	
1/49-51	Grand Central Moderns	1950-68
1/52	Green, Elizabeth	1962
1/53	Hallmark Art Award	1949-51
1/54	Hancock, Bill	1950-81
1/55	Herbolsheimer, Hank	1979-81
1/56	Horiuchi, Paul	1971; n.d.
1/57	Krouse, Betty	1959-80
1/58	Lake Ozette Resort	1962-68
1/59	Leadbettters	1967-82
1/60	MacLachlan, Margaret	1959-72
1/61	March, Arthur	1956-65
1/62	March, Dorothy	1950, 1956
1/63	March, Sue	1959-66
1/64	Margulis, Rena	1950
1/65	Martyn, Ruby Holmes	1952-67
1/66	Mason Clinic	1969-79
1/67	Metropolitan Museum of Art	1950
1/68	Milbank, Helen	1960-69; n.d.
1/69	Morrison, George	1954-74
1/70	Morrison, Myrtle	1978-82
1/71	The Museum of Modern Art	1955, 1963
1/72	Music and Art Foundation	1950-78
1/73	Nelson, Jeane	1952-74; n.d.
1/74	<i>New York Herald Tribune</i>	1955
1/75	<i>New York Times</i>	1970
1/76	Paeff, Bashka	1940-44
1/77	Paintings of the Year, Pepsi Cola's Annual Art Competition	1946-49
1/78	Peabody Museum	1977-79
1/79	Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts	1947-52
1/80	Pierce County (Artnobile)	1968
1/81	Pierce, Waldo	1948-50
1/82	PONCHO (Patrons of Northwest Civic, Cultural, and Charitable Organizations)	1965-69
1/83	Roberts, Colette	1952-68; n.d.
1/84	Roethke, Beatrice and Theodore	1959
1/85	Seattle Art Museum	1948-76; n.d.
1/86	Seattle Symphony Orchestra	1960, 1964
1/87	Seelye, Mary-Averett	1965-76; n.d.
1/88	Seitz, Bill and Irma	1950-80
1/89	Seligman, Otto	1959, 1964
1/90	Shady Hill School	1946-65
1/91	Shaw, Harold	1952, 1953
1/92	Shreve, Crump and Low	1946-57
1/93	Smith College	1944-80; n.d.
1/94	Smith, Robert Charles	1964-82
1/95	Smith Tower Gallery	1960

<u>Box/Folders</u>		<u>Dates</u>
	INCOMING LETTERS (cont.)	
1/96	State University of Iowa	1944-58
1/97	Tilley, Erna S.	1954-77
1/98	Tobey, Mark	1959
1/99	Tsutakawa, George	1973
1/100	Uhlman, Wesley C.	1977
1/101	U.S. State Department	1963-66
1/102	University of Washington, Henry Art Gallery	1949-79; n.d.
2/1	University of Washington Libraries	1974-76
2/2	Utley, Josephine	1960-81; n.d.
2/3	Utley, Windsor	1972, 1973
2/4	Visser't Hooft, Martha	1950-81
2/5	Washburn Municipal University of Topeka, Kansas	1944
2/6	Washington. State Capitol Museum	1964-74
2/7	Western Washington State College	1962
2/8	W.S. Budworth and Sons	1946-54
2/9	Young, Theodosia	1966-73
2/10	Zeal-Art Incorporated	1950
2/11-33	A-Z Miscellaneous	
2/34-38	First Names Only, A-Z	
2/39	Unidentifiable	
	OUTGOING LETTERS	
2/40-50		1936-40
3/1-14		1941-83; n.d.
	GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE	
3/15	Re: Leadbetter Genealogy	1968
3/16	Re: Recommendations for Students	1950; n.d.
3/17-18	Miscellaneous	1934-74; n.d.
3/19	LISTS of Exhibits	N.D.
	EXHIBITION EPHEMERA	
3/20, 21	Grand Central Moderns	1958-67
3/22	Seattle Art Museum	1948-83
3/23	State Capitol Museum	1975-68
3/24	Various Seattle Galleries	1959-80; n.d.
3/25	Return Cards, Labels, and Exhibitor Tickets	1944-52; n.d.
3/26-29	Miscellaneous	1950-80; n.d.
	EXHIBITION EPHEMERA Of Others	
3/30	Foster/White Gallery	1976-82
3/31	Grand Central Moderns	1952-65; n.d.
3/32	Otto Seligman Gallery	1960-66
3/33	Utley's Art Galleries	1967-76; n.d.
3/34	Zoe Dusanne Gallery	1955; n.d.
3/35	Miscellaneous Seattle Galleries	1964-74; n.d.

<u>Box/Folders</u>		<u>Dates</u>
	EXHIBITION EPHEMERA Of Others (cont.)	
3/36	Mark Tobey Exhibits	1954-76
3/37	Windsor Utley Exhibits	1960-72
3/38-43	Miscellaneous	1945-81
3/44-46	EPHEMERA, ARTS RELATED	1962-84; n.d.
3/47 to 4/16	EPHEMERA	1940-71; n.d.
4/17	LEGAL DOCUMENTS	1946, 1962; n.d.
4/18	STUDIO BOOKS	1958-81
4/19	FINANCIAL RECORDS	1952-81; n.d.
4/20-25	SPEECHES AND WRITINGS	1934-82; n.d.
4/26-32	SPEECHES AND WRITINGS OF OTHERS	1940-65
4/33	NEWS RELEASES	1950-77; n.d.
4/34, 35	NOTES	n.d.
4/36 to 5/1	PHOTOGRAPHS of Artwork	1937-63, n.d.
5/2-5	PHOTOGRAPHS of V. Banks	1922-80; n.d.
5/6	PHOTOGRAPHS of Others	1956, 1971; n.d.
5/7	PHOTOGRAPHS – Miscellaneous	1928, 1958; n.d.
5/8	NEGATIVES	1944-47; n.d.
5/9, 10	SLIDES of Artwork	1944-49; n.d.
5/11	SLIDES of V. banks	n.d.
5/12	SLIDES of Others	n.d.
5/13	SLIDES – Miscellaneous	n.d.
5/14-16	SKETCHES AND DRAWINGS	1960, 1962; n.d.
5/17	CHRISTMAS CARDS (Banks' Originals)	1936-1965; n.d.
6	MOTION PICTURE FILMS	
	“T.V. Class”	n.d.
	“461 Final, March ‘63”	1963[?]

<u>Box/Folders</u>		<u>Dates</u>
5/18-22	PUBLICATIONS	1953-82; n.d.
5/23, 24	NEWSLETTERS	1952-77; n.d.
5/25	BOOKS re: Tobey	1959, 1962
5/26, 27	GUESTBOOKS	1950-65
5/28 to 7/2	CALENDARS	1960-1978
	SUBJECT SERIES	
7/3	Artist's Equity Association	1950-64
7/4	"The Artists of Puget Sound"	1962
7/5	Garden Plans	1954
7/6	Guggenheim Fellowship Application	1949
7/7	Laurelhurst Neighborhood	1964-69
7/8-41	CLIPPINGS	1945-82; n.d.
7/42, 43	MISCELLANY	1934-48; n.d.
6	SCRAPBOOKS	n.d.

Subgroup

SMITH COLLEGE CLUB OF SEATTLE

7/44-48	Incoming Letters	ca. 1959-81
7/49-55	Outgoing Letters	ca. 1961-74
7/56	General Correspondence	ca. 1962-73
7/57	Minutes/Agenda	ca. 1961-70
7/58	Photographs	1961
7/59	Newsletters	ca. 1967-81
7/60, 61	Publications	
7/62	Speeches and Writings	
7/63	Notes	
7/64	Lists	

Box/Folders

Dates

Subgroup (cont.)

SMITH COLLEGE CLUB OF SEATTLE (cont.)

7/65	Clippings
7/66	Ephemera
7/67, 68	Miscellany