THE AARON DOUGLAS COLLECTION
PAPERS, 1921 - 1973

The Aaron Douglas Collection consists of biographical data on Douglas; general and personal correspondence (1921-1974) with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Harmon Foundation, John Cowles of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune who commissioned Douglas to do a portrait of Mary McLeod Bethune, and others; early drawings, sketches, watercolors, writings, lectures, speeches, reports by Douglas and others; classroom material (while Douglas was Head of the Department of Art at Fisk University); programs, pamphlets, leaflets; exhibitions by Douglas and others; material on the Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity; accounts, bills, notes; photographs; publications (such as magazines, guides, directories) relating to art; and clippings (newspaper) which comprise an important part of the collection. These clippings cover the period 1930-1973 and there are about 70 alone on Douglas, while the others relate mostly to art in general.

Processed and compiled by
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Fisk University
1973
AARON DOUGLAS
(1899 - 1979)

Born in 1899 in Topeka, Kansas, Aaron Douglas was the most prominent artist-illustrator of the Harlem Renaissance. He was an alumnus of the University of Nebraska and Columbia University. While a scholarship student he studied mural decoration with Winold Reiss in New York City. His murals eventually lead to commissions and ultimately, after drawings for James Weldon Johnson's God's Trombones and illustrations, to a contract in 1930 to paint the now famous murals at Fisk.

His Fisk murals and those in the Countee Cullen Branch of the New York Public Library are graphic symbols of the Douglas philosophy as artist and as a professor of art at Fisk. He taught and acted as chairman of the Art Department at Fisk for twenty-nine years, retiring as professor emeritus.

His exhibitions include D'Caz-Delbo Galleries (1934), College Art Traveling Exhibition (1934-1935), Harmon Foundation (1928, 1935), the Texas Centennial Exposition, and Gallery of Modern Art, New York (1940).
AARON DOUGLAS COLLECTION
Papers, 1921--

Shelf List

Box 1

f. 1--Biographical data
   CORRESPONDENCE--GENERAL
   2--Allen, Simona - Burkhalter, George--1958-73
   3--Carroll, Margaret - Culpepper, Mrs. Arthur C.--1952-72
   4--Dadie, B. B. - Driskell, David--1950-72
   5--Encyclopedia Britannica - Harley, Ralph--1951-73
   6--Harmon Foundation--1947-67
   7--Hartley, William - Hunt, R. H.--1944-73
   8--Igoe, Mrs. James T. - Johns, Robert--1949-73
   9--Johnson, Charles S. - Koenig, Mrs. Robert J.--1936-74
  10--Lawson, James R. - Meier, August--1936-73
  11--Metropolitan Museum of Art - Oxford University Press--1949-72
  12--Pach, Walter - Sweeny, Frank--1950-73
  13--Talbert, Shirley - Whitlock, Edwina--1930-72
  14--Wight, Frederick - Young Professional Artists--1957-73
   CORRESPONDENCE--PERSONAL
  15--Incoming--1933, 1959-73, n.d.
  17--Re death of Alta Douglas (Wife of Aaron Douglas), 1958-60
   FORM LETTERS
  18--1949-50; 1960-63

Box 2

DRAWINGS
  1--Drawings
  2--Sketches
  3--Sketches
  4--Photographs of drawings
  5--Watercolors
  6--Copies of drawings used in various publications

Box 3

WRITINGS--LECTURES
  1--Forward to "The Harlem Renaissance," Dillard University Scholars-
     Statesmen Lecture Series, March, 1971, 2c., 6p.; 9p. handwritten
Aaron Douglas Collection

Shelf List

5--"Dedication of the Reiss Collection," 1952 Arts Festival, Fisk University, 2p. typewritten; 11p. handwritten (incomplete)

WRITINGS--MISCELLANEOUS

17--Mural Decoration - Build Thee More Stately Mansions, n.d.
18--A Sketch of the Murals - Fisk University Library, n.d.
19--Introduction of Speaker for Arts Festival, n.d., 2c., 2p. typewritten; 5p. handwritten
20--Description of Paintings Located in Various Buildings on the Fisk University Campus, n.d.
21--Class notes--ca. 1919-20
22--Class notes--ca. 1925

WRITINGS--BY OTHERS

23--Bibliography of Works by George Ivanovitch Gurjdjeff (1865-1949)
24--"The Bitter River" by Langston Hughes (autographed by Hughes, November 13, 1942)
25--"Charles S. Johnson: Combating White Racism in Preparation for the Freedom Movement" by Patrick Gilpin, July, 1970
26--"Henry Ossawa Tanner, American Artist" by Jeff Donaldson, February, 1970, reprinted by permission of Negro Digest
28--"Medical Students and Surgery," 1970, p. 8, 9, and 13
29--"Negritude: Agreement and Disagreement" by Samuel Allen, n.d.
30--"The Negro As Artist and In American Art," p. 207-240, Chapter 10 of The Negro in American Culture by Margaret Just Butcher
31--"Pan-Africanism: Nascent and Mature" by John A. Davis, June, 1960
32--"The Social Significance of the Arts in Africa Today" by Selby Mwusi, n.d.
33--"The Third Emancipation" by Chief Anthony Enahoro, June, 1972
34--"What Identity?" by P. Chike Onwauchi, n.d.
35--Untitled
Aaron Douglas  
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REPORTS—BY OTHERS
37—Report of Task Force #3
38—2nd World Black Festival of Arts and Culture

Box 4

ORGANIZATIONS, COMMITTEES
1—Afro-American Committee for Gifts of Art and Literature to Ghana—Project
2—National Society of Mural Painters—Newsletters, minutes
3—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—Correspondence—1968-74
4—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—List of Members
5—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—Grand Boule Constitution and Bylaws (1970)
6—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—The Boule Journal—October, 1962
7—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—The Boule Journal—April, 1963
8—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—The Boule Journal—Spring/Summer, 1968; Winter, 1968
9—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—The Boule Journal—Summer; Winter, 1969
10—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—The Boule Journal—Spring, 1970; Summer, 1971
11—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—The Boule Journal—Winter, 1971; Spring, 1972
12—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—The Boule Journal—Summer-Fall, 1972; Spring, 1973
13—Sigma Phi Fraternity—Newsletters
14—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—Programs
15—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—Financial Reports, 1972-73
16—Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity—Speech by Aaron Douglas delivered at the Exhibition of Afro-American Artists at the Alpha Boule, 1967

Box 5

CLASSROOM MATERIAL
1—Description of Art Courses
2—Comprehensive Examination Questions—1951-63
3—Completed Final Examinations—1956-57
5—Attendance and Absentee Sheets; Student Work Schedules
6—Notes
7—Notes
8—Notes
9—Notes
10—Notes
Aaron Douglas
Shelf List

Box 6

1--Accounts, bills, notes
2--Accounts, bills, notes
3--Accounts, bills, notes
4--Accounts, bills, notes
5--Accounts, bills, notes
6--Accounts, bills, notes
7--Accounts, bills, notes
8--Accounts, bills, notes

Box 7

EXHIBITIONS
1--Aaron Douglas--Description of exhibitions
5--Miscellaneous
6--Miscellaneous

PROGRAMS
7--Fisk University--Festival of Music & Art--1946, 1948, 1952, 1953,
   1972, 1973
9--Miscellaneous

PAMPHLETS
10--Art
11--Miscellaneous

LEAFLETS
12--Fisk University
13--Miscellaneous

Box 8

CLIPPINGS
1--Aaron Douglas--1930, 1939, 1942, 1948, 1949
5--Aaron Douglas--n.d.
6--Fisk University
7--Relating to art
8--Relating to art
9--Miscellaneous
Aaron Douglas
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PHOTOGRAPHS
1—Aaron Douglas and others
2—Photographs of pictures done by Douglas
3—Miscellaneous
PRINTED MATTER
4—Newsletters, announcements, invitations
MEMORABILIA
5—Greeting cards, etc.
6—Greeting cards, etc.
MISCELLANEOUS MATERIAL
7—Biographical sketches of painters
8—Aaron Douglas (various items)

Box 10

Collection
Publications—Art

Box 11

Collection
Publication—Art

Box 12

Collection
Publications—Art

Box 13

Collection
Publications—Miscellaneous

Box 14

Collection
Books