

AARON DOUGLAS COLLECTION

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, water-colors, 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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Archives and Manuscript Collections,  
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.  
16--Outgoing--1950, 1973, 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  
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- 2--"The Harlem Renaissance," Dillard University Scholars-Statesmen Lecture Series, March, 1971, 2c., 23p.; 3p. (incomplete)
- 3--"Art in Life," n.d., 8p.
- 4--"The Art in Painting," n.d., 12p.
- 5--"Dedication of the Reiss Collection," 1952 Arts Festival, Fisk University, 2p. typewritten; 11p. handwritten (incomplete)
- 6--"The Development of Negro Art in American Life," Tuskegee Institute, n.d., 2c., 15p.
- 7--"The Harlem Renaissance," Fisk University Negro Culture Workshop, n.d., 17p.
- 8--"The Negro Too In American Art," LeMoyne College, November 1, 1948, 21p.
- 9--"New Horizons in Art," n.d., 5p.
- 10--"The Phenomena of the Arts," n.d., 2c., 7p.
- 11--"Review of Negro in American Art," n.d., 23p.
- 12--Untitled, n.d., 2p.
- 13--Untitled, n.d., 12p.
- 14--Untitled and incomplete, n.d., 3p.
- 15--Untitled and incomplete, n.d., 19p.
- WRITINGS--MISCELLANEOUS
- 16--Library Murals, The Fisk Herald, n.d.
- 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. type-written; 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 Gurdjieff (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
- 27--"The Jungle Birds" by H. H. Prince Akikki K. Nyabango, n.d.
- 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

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**REPORTS--BY OTHERS**

- 36--CONFSBA, Conference on the Functional Aspects of Black Art, May, 1970
- 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
- 4--Student Research Papers--1960, n.d.
- 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
- 2--Aaron Douglas--1938, 1948, 1949, 1952, 1956, 1971, n.d.
- 3--Fisk University--1944, 1952, 1963, 1967, 1969, 1970, 1971
- 4--Fisk University--1972, 1973, n.d.

- 5--Miscellaneous
- 6--Miscellaneous

PROGRAMS

- 7--Fisk University--Festival of Music & Art--1946, 1948, 1952, 1953, 1955, 1957, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1964
- 8--Fisk University--Festival of Music & Art--1966, 1969, 1970, 1971, 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
- 2--Aaron Douglas--1951, 1952, 1953, 1955, 1958, 1959
- 3--Aaron Douglas--1962, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968
- 4--Aaron Douglas--1970, 1971, 1972, 1973
- 5--Aaron Douglas--n.d.
- 6--Fisk University
- 7--Relating to art
- 8--Relating to art
- 9--Miscellaneous

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Shelf List**

**Box 9**

**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**