

Hugh Breckenridge papers

MS.036

Finding Aid prepared by Hoang Tran



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY
OF THE FINE ARTS

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
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Updated by Hoang Tran, January 2016

Summary Information

Repository	The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock Archives
Creator	Hugh H. Breckenridge (1870-1937)
Title	Hugh H. Breckenridge papers
Date [bulk]	
Date [inclusive]	1891; 1914-1943, 1967
Extent	1/2 document box, one square box
Location note	
Language	
Language of Materials note	English
Abstract	Collection includes correspondence, photographs, ephemera, manuscripts, notes, and various other materials pertaining to Hugh Breckenridge's career from the 1920s-1930s.

Preferred Citation note

[identification of item], Title of Collection, Collection ID#, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

Historical note

Hugh H. Breckenridge (1870-1937) was an artist long associated with the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He was born in Virginia in 1870, and in 1887 at age seventeen came to Philadelphia to study at the Academy, where he subsequently won the Academy's European Travel Scholarship in 1892. After studying in Paris, he returned to Philadelphia and acquired his first teaching position at the Springside School. Shortly thereafter, in 1894, he became an instructor at the Academy where he would teach for over forty years. He died at age sixty-seven while still on the faculty.

Breckenridge's varied body of work combined income-producing works of skillful academic realism, primarily in portraiture, with increasingly bold and expressive compositions that led him from impressionism to his late-career abstractions. Along with Henry McCarter, and the younger artist Arthur B. Carles, Breckenridge was one of three Academy instructors who brought a modernist spirit to the school in the early twentieth century. He exhibited extensively in the Academy annuals, was given one-man shows in 1904 and 1934, and was awarded the Academy Gold Medal of Honor in 1919.

Scope and Contents note

These papers comprise part of a collection of Breckenridge materials given to the Valley House Gallery in Dallas, Texas, in the 1960s by Dorothy Breckenridge, the artist's widow. In 1967 the gallery published an exhibition catalogue with an essay written by gallery co-director Margaret Vogel. She relied heavily on the materials provided by Dorothy Breckenridge, and her essay suggests that other materials may have been lent temporarily by Breckenridge's daughter.

During the 1970s and 1980s the gallery sold the Breckenridge paintings from Mrs. Breckenridge's estate, and became the primary source for authentication information. The most important part of the manuscripts collection, Breckenridge's paintings logs and scrapbooks, were invaluable in these efforts. In 1980 the Archives of American Art microfilmed the Breckenridge manuscripts on four different reels (1779, 1828, 1907, and 2410).

In 2006 Valley House Gallery Director Kevin Vogel gave the materials listed in this finding aid to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, while retaining the paintings logs and scrapbooks for the gallery authentication activities.

It is not known if some of the materials filmed in 1980, other than the paintings logs and scrapbooks, are still at the gallery, or if they have been lost.

Significant material on Hugh Breckenridge will also be found in the papers of his student Katharine Dunn Pagon (including an album of photographs of Breckenridge work, and a wax death mask of his face). The Arthur B. Carles Papers and the Jane Allen Boyer Papers also contain relevant items. In addition, the Academy archives retains files of both biographical and photographic material on faculty members, as well as extensive correspondence with Breckenridge. The Academy library houses a large file of newspaper clippings on Breckenridge.

Also see PC.2015.01 - Hugh Henry Breckenridge photograph collection.

Arrangement note

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access note

Collection is open for research.

The archives reserves the right to restrict access to materials of sensitive nature. Please contact the department for further information.

Conditions Governing Use note

The collection is the physical property of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Archives. The Museum holds literary rights only for material created by Museum personnel or given to the Museum with such rights specifically assigned. For all other material, literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. Researchers are responsible for obtaining permission from rights holders for publication and for other purposes where stated.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Provenance note

Gift of the Valley House Gallery, 2006. Valley House director Kevin Vogel did not return the Deed of Gift form to the Academy. It may be that he realized that the Breckenridge materials were given to the Gallery in the 1960s without any formal paperwork, and thus is not sure that the Valley House Gallery has clear title.

If the Breckenridge materials still at the Gallery are ever transferred to an institution like the Archives of American Art or the Amon Carter Museum, the Academy's small collection could be rejoined with the larger part of the original collection.

Death Mask was a gift of Mrs. Catherine Dunn Pagon in 1980.

Processing Information note

Controlled Access Headings

Person(s)

Corporate Name(s)

Genre(s)

Geographic Name(s)

Subject(s)

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note

Collection Inventory

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Finding aid and donor correspondence		1	1
Photographs (8 items) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group of Academy students, published as the frontispiece in the Valley House Gallery exhibition catalogue of 1967 with a date of 1891-92. The photograph carries no inscriptions, and Valley House Director Kevin Vogel believed that the date and identifications of the students came from Dorothy Breckenridge in 1967. Original photograph transferred to the Academy archives school photographs. Identifications as given in the 1967 catalogue need clarification. Oversize reproduction retained in the Breckenridge collection. • Photograph of Breckenridge seated, 1920s • Photograph of Breckenridge standing, in profile, in front of a house, 1920s • Three photographs of students working outdoors, Breckenridge criticizing in two of them, probably taken at the Gloucester school location, 1920s? (digitized) • Photograph of Breckenridge and Dorothy Breckenridge, late 1930s • Photo-reproduction of a street scene with a 	1920s	1	2

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Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
domed building and early twentieth century automobiles, possibly Gloucester, Mass.			
Printed matter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibition checklists: Phila. Art Alliance, December 1, 1927 to January 2, 1928; Grand Rapids Art Gallery, October 29 to November 28, 1928; Pennsylvania Academy, March 14 to April 5, 1934 • Brochure for <i>The Breckenridge School of Art</i>, 1937 • Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts school circular, 1936-37 • <i>Bulletin of the Philadelphia Art Alliance</i>, March 1938, with article about Breckenridge Memorial Exhibition held there 	1927-1938	1	3
Clippings (10 photocopies, 14 original)	1914-1943, 1978	1	4
Manuscript – The Art of Painting (Part 1)		1	5
Manuscript – The Art of Painting (Part 2)		1	6
Correspondence: with Mrs. Breckenridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1938 condolence from Charles Townsend • 1938 letter from Art Alliance re memorial exhibition with list of works • 1942 acknowledgment of gift of a painting from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. 	1938, 1942	1	7
Printed matter: Valley House Gallery	1967	1	8
Notes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Aug. 4th Introduction” • “Selection (Aesthetic)” 		1	9
Death Mask		2	