

Doris Samitz papers

Ms. Coll. 933

Finding aid prepared by Arielle Middleman.

Last updated on February 01, 2018.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2013.10.03

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Samitz, Doris, 1923-2008
Title	Doris Samitz papers
Call number	Ms. Coll. 933
Date [inclusive]	1956-2008
Extent	0.4 linear feet (1 box)
Language	English
Abstract	Doris Samitz (1923-2008), an art enthusiast, was involved in the Philadelphia art scene. This collection documents her involvement with the Arts Council of the Broad Street "Y" and the Barnes Foundation from the 1950s until her death, but particularly during the 1960s and the 1970s.

Cite as:

Doris Samitz papers, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Doris Samitz, an art enthusiast, was born March 28, 1923, in Philadelphia. She married Doctor Morris H. Samitz (1909-1992), a professor of dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania and the Chief of Dermatology at the Graduate Hospital. She traveled with him throughout the world as he served as a visiting professor in Tanzania, the Philippines, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, England, and Argentina.

Samitz was involved in the Philadelphia art scene, in particular with the Arts Council of the Broad Street "Y" in the 1960s. It appears that she corresponded with artists and authors, encouraging them to speak at "Y" Arts Council events. She also studied music and art at the Barnes Foundation, taking classes in the philosophy and appreciation of art. Her coursework at the Barnes eventually led to a friendship with Violette de Mazia, the director of education of the Art Department of the Barnes Foundation. Samitz also served as a member on the Board of the University of Pennsylvania Museum Women's Committee and served on the Doctors' Wives Committee of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania for thirty years. Samitz died on October 2, 2008.

Scope and Contents

This collection, dating from 1957 to 2003, documents Doris Samitz's involvement in the art scene in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The material is arranged in two series, 'Y' Arts Council events material and Barnes Foundation material.

The 'Y' Arts Council events material includes letters to and from Arts Council members, artists, and authors relating to requests for the artists and authors to participate in events. There is also publicity material and a few items of artwork. Artists and authors include David Douglas Duncan, Geoffrey Hendricks, Robert Indiana, Elsa Lanchester, Norman Mailer, Arthur Penn, Anne Sexton, Andy Warhol, and Tom Wolfe. The letters from Tom Wolfe are particularly interesting as they include illustrations and impart a very warm and friendly tone. This material is arranged by artist or author. Also of interest is an invitation to the first Andy Warhol exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art which is printed on the back of a Campbell's Soup can label.

The Barnes Foundation material consists of letters to and from Violette de Mazia who was the Education Director for the Art Department of the Barnes Foundation. The correspondence between de Mazia and Samitz began when Samitz enrolled in art classes at the Barnes Foundation; but over the years, clearly developed into a friendly personal interchange. Very few letters have significant substance; instead, they are thank you notes, Christmas cards, and brief updates. Also included are a few Barnes Foundation publications and brochures, particularly relating to Violette de Mazia.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

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Sponsor

The processing of this collection was made possible through the generous funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, administered through the Council on Library and Information Resources' "Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives" Project.

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Source of Acquisition

Gift of Phyllis Samitz Cohen, daughter of Doris Samitz, 2007-2008.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Barnes Foundation. Art Department.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Brochures
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Correspondence
- Newsletters
- Works of art

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- De Mazia, Violette, 1899-1988

SUBJECT(S)

- Art
- Artists--United States
- Authors, American
- Women in the arts

Collection Inventory

I. "Y" ARTS COUNCIL EVENTS MATERIAL.

	Box	Folder
Hendricks, Geoffrey: painted cloud pillowcase and postcards from Hendricks to Samitz, 1967-2003.	1	1
Hendricks, Geoffrey: "A Happening Place," exhibition publicity materials, 2003-2008.	1	2
Indiana, Robert: wool felt sash designed for the Museum of Merchandise, 1967.	1	3
Mailer, Norman: letters and contracts regarding Mailer's visit to "Y" Arts Council in Philadelphia and clippings regarding Mailer's work, 1967-1968.	1	4
Wolfe, Tom: letters from Wolfe regarding his visit to the "Y" Arts Council in Philadelphia and publicity material, 1971-1973.	1	5
Other artists and authors: letters and exhibition material (Artists and authors include: David Douglas, Duncan [letter to Doris Samitz], Elsa Lanchester [letter to Mr. Robert Stern], Arthur Penn [letter to Doris Samitz], Anne Sexton [letter to Mrs. Lubersky], and Andy Warhol [invitation to exhibition opening at the Institute of Contemporary Art]), 1962-1970.	1	6

II. BARNES FOUNDATION MATERIAL.

	Box	Folder
Letters to and from Violette de Mazia, Education Director of the Art Department of the Barnes Foundation, 1956-1998.	1	7
Barnes Foundation newsletter, brochures, and newspaper clipping, circa 1957-1970.	1	8