

Blaine, Nell, Collection

Nell Blaine collection

1945-1999

Title Statement

Blaine, Nell, CollectionA Guide to the Nell Blaine Collection, 1945-1999 M 67

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

M 67

Unit ID

/repositories/5/resources/272

Unit Date

1945-1999

Language

English

Creator

Blaine, Nell, 1922-1996

Extent

1.5 Linear Feet

Repository

VCU James Branch Cabell Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection open for research.

Preferred Citation

Nell Blaine Collection, Collection Number M 67, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Va.

Biographical Note

Nell Blaine (1922-1996) was a prominent American painter. Blaine was born in Richmond, Virginia and attended the Richmond Professional Institute from 1939-42. She studied under prominent artists such as Theresa Pollak (1899-2002) and Worden Day (1915-1986). In 1942-43, she received a grant from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts to study under the renowned abstract expressionist, Hans Hofmann (1880-1966). Her art grew out of the Abstract Expressionist Movement of the 1940s. Her vast array of work, which spans half a century, encompasses indoor scenes, landscapes, and still lifes. Her work appears in many major American collections including the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others. Even though Blaine relocated permanently to Manhattan, New York in the 1940s, she exhibited frequently in Richmond. The Richmond Times-Dispatch extolled her success throughout her career, recalling her roots as a Richmond native. Blaine traveled extensively in Europe, the Caribbean, and South America to paint and to find inspiration. While staying in Greece in 1959, she contracted spinal bulbar polio. The disease left her paralyzed from the waist down for the rest of her life. She continued painting and exhibiting until the 1990s. Not only does Blaine's art contribute to American painting but she leaves a legacy for the Richmond art community.

Scope and Contents

The Nell Blaine Collection, 1945-1999, is significant because the collection provides foundational research materials on Nell Blaine's career and contribution to American art. The three most common materials in the collection are articles and newspaper clippings, exhibition brochures, and correspondence from Nell Blaine.

Series I, donated by Maurice Bonds and Theresa Pollak, contains five folders. Articles and newspaper clippings from 1961-1973 and exhibition catalogs spanning 1970-1999 are key primary source materials. Series I also contains an academic paper about Nell Blaine from 1971 by VCU alumni, Janice Ritter (now Janice Ritter McMurray).

Series II contains four folders that have an unconfirmed provenance. The series contains a 1972 agenda calendar that features Nell Blaine's art in the month of January. There are also black and white photographs of Nell Blaine's work that date between 1959-1975. The articles and exhibitions, ranging from 1945-1978, are grouped together based on the original order of donation.

Series III includes ten folders that were donated by John Bryan in the 1990s. Half of the collection contains correspondence from Nell Blaine to Mr. and Mrs. Hal Clark between 1971-1995. The articles and newspaper clippings were collected by the Clarks between 1948-1993. The two folders of postcards were probably sent from Nell Blaine to the Clarks-she often attached blank postcards to her letters highlighting the places she visited or artists she admired.

Series IV consists of eight folders donated in 2010 by Janice Ritter McMurray, a former student at Virginia Commonwealth University. She originally compiled materials for an art history class in 1970 but she continued to collect exhibition brochures and newspaper clippings until 1992. McMurray had travelled to Blaine's studio in New York to conduct an interview and they remained friends for many years afterward. Two important papers written by McMurray are also in the collection. First, is an undated reflective paper that summarizes McMurray's involvement with Blaine. A second important paper from McMurray is her draft from the 1970 class, which contains a note with suggestions from Blaine herself. A copy of the final paper has been attached to the draft. The original paper appears in Series I, Folder 2. The letters McMurray received from Blaine between 1969-1972 are also in the collection. A set of blank stationary designed by Blaine give a glimpse into her art. Photographs from 1968 also show Blaine's work in progress.

Keywords

Painters -- Virginia -- Richmond

Painting, American -- 20th century.

Virginia Commonwealth University -- Alumni and alumnae

Blaine, Nell, 1922-1996

Arrangement

The Nell Blaine Collection, 1945-1999, is divided into four series: Series I: The Maurice Bonds and Theresa Pollak Collection of Nell Blaine Materials 1961-1999, Series II: Nell Blaine Materials 1945-1978, Series III: The John Bryan Collection of Nell Blaine Materials 1948-1995, Series IV: The Janice McMurray Collection of Nell Blaine materials 1949-1992.

Description of Subordinate Components

The Maurice Bonds and Theresa Pollak Collection of Nell Blaine Materials

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48727

Unit Date 1961-1999, undated

Mixed Materials [A11423649020] 1 (box)

Articles and newspaper clippings

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48731

Unit Date 1961-1973

Mixed Materials [A11423649020] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Biographical Materials

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48732

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [A11423649020] 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48733

Unit Date 1995-1996

Mixed Materials [A11423649020] 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Exhibit brochures

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48734

Unit Date 1970-1999

Mixed Materials [A11423649020] 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Original academic paper by Janice Ritter

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48735

Unit Date 1971

Mixed Materials [A11423649020] 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Nell Blaine Materials

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48728

Unit Date 1945-1978

Mixed Materials [A11422799979] 2 (box)

Articles and Exhibit Brochures

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48736

Unit Date 1945-1969

Mixed Materials [A11422799979] 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Articles and Exhibit Brochures

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48737

Unit Date 1970-1978

Mixed Materials [A11422799979] 2 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Peace Calendar featuring Nell Blaine's art

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48738

Unit Date 1972

Mixed Materials [A11422799979] 2 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Photographs of Nell Blaine's art

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48739

Unit Date 1959-1975

Mixed Materials [A11422799979] 2 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

The John Bryan Collection of Nell Blaine Materials

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48729

Unit Date 1948-1995

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

Correspondence to Mr. and Mrs. H.B. Clark

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48740

Unit Date 1971-1976

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Correspondence to Mr. and Mrs. H.B. Clark

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48741

Unit Date 1977-1980

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Correspondence to Mr. and Mrs. H.B. Clark

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48742

Unit Date 1981-1985

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Correspondence to Mr. and Mrs. H.B. Clark

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48743

Unit Date 1986-1990

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Correspondence to Mr. and Mrs. H.B. Clark

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48744

Unit Date 1991-1995

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Miscellaneous Nell Blaine papers

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48745

Unit Date 1986-1991

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Mr. and Mrs. H.B. Clark postcard collection

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48746

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Nell Blaine postcard collection

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48747

Unit Date 1975-1992

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Newspaper Clippings

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48748

Unit Date 1948-1993

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Photographs by Nell Blaine

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48749

Unit Date 1993-1994

Mixed Materials [A11423649004] 3 (box)

The Janice McMurray Collection of Nell Blaine materials

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48730

Unit Date 1949-1992, undated

Mixed Materials [A11423649012] 4 (box)

Articles and newspaper clippings

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48750

Unit Date 1960-1992, undated

Mixed Materials [A11423649012] 4 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Correspondence from Nell Blaine to Janice Ritter McMurray

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48751

Unit Date 1969-1972, undated

Mixed Materials [A11423649012] 4 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Draft of academic paper from Richard Carlyon's class with comments from Blaine

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48752

Unit Date 1970

Mixed Materials [A11423649012] 4 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Exhibit Brochures

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48753

Unit Date 1949-1992

Mixed Materials [A11423649012] 4 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Janice Ritter McMurray's reflective paper on Nell Blaine

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48754

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [A11423649012] 4 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Letter of recommendation from four distinguished people in American art

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48755

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [A11423649012] 4 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Photographic collection

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48756

Unit Date 1968

Mixed Materials [A11423649012] 4 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Stationary designed by Nell Blaine

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/48757

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [A11423649012] 4 (box)

Container 8 (folder)