John Biggers papers, 1950-2001

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Descriptive Summary

Title: John Biggers papers, 1950-2001
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 1179
Extent: 27.5 linear feet (62 boxes), 6 oversized papers boxes and 2 oversized papers folders (OP), 2 oversized bound volumes (OBV), 1 extra-oversized paper (XOP), and AV Masters: .25 linear feet (1 box)
Abstract: Papers of African American mural artist and professor John Biggers including correspondence, photographs, printed materials, professional materials, subject files, writings, and audiovisual materials documenting his work as an artist and educator.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access
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Source
Gift/Purchase, 2011.

Citation
[after identification of item(s)], John Biggers papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing
Processed by Laura Starratt, Will Love, and Michael Camp, August 2014

Collection Description

Biographical Note
John Thomas Biggers (1924-2001), African American artist, author, and educator, was born on April 13, 1924 to Paul and Cora Biggers in Gastonia, North Carolina, the youngest of seven children. He attended Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) in Hampton, Virginia and started taking art classes under the tutelage of Viktor Lowenfeld, but was drafted into the US Navy in 1943 and served until December 1945. Also in 1943, Biggers was featured in the exhibit Young Negro Art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Biggers returned to Hampton in 1946 for one semester, and when Lowenfeld moved to Pennsylvania State University (State College, Pennsylvania) in mid-1946, Biggers followed him to study in the art department there, receiving a Bachelor of Science in January 1948 and a Master of Science in September 1948. On December 27, 1948, Biggers married Hazel Hales, whom he had met at Hampton in 1942. Biggers received a doctoral degree in 1954 from Pennsylvania State University with a thesis entitled The Negro Woman in American Life and Education.

Biggers commenced a teaching career soon after obtaining his masters degree. In 1949, Biggers accepted a position as an instructor at Alabama State Teachers College in Montgomery, but moved to Houston, Texas, in August to establish and serve as department head of the Art Department at Texas State University for Negroes (later Texas Southern University), where he spent over thirty years of his career. Biggers published a book entitled Black Art in Houston in 1978 with Carroll Simms and Edward Weems. He retired from teaching in 1983.

Biggers' first major works were the egg tempera paintings Dying Soldier (1942), Community Preacher (1943), and U.S. Navy Mural (1945). The current locations of the first two works are unknown, and U.S. Navy Mural is currently disassembled. Biggers followed these works in the late 1940s with the murals, Burial, Sharecroppers, Baptism, Day of the Harvest, and Night of the Poor. The next phase in Biggers' career came with his move to Houston. In the 1950s Biggers produced Harvesters and Gleaners (1952), Contribution of Negro Women to American Life and Education (1953), History of Education in Morris County, Texas (1955), and History of the International Longshoremen's Local 872 (1957).

In developing his artistic projects, Biggers traveled extensively to learn about the African cultural experience. In 1957, John and Hazel spent six months on a United Nations fellowship traveling in Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, and Dahomey. He published Ananse: The Web of Life in Africa, a book based on these travels, in 1962. A Danforth award in 1969 allowed John and Hazel to spend six months in Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Ghana. In 1980,
Biggers visited Haiti along with other Texas Southern faculty and also visited Amsterdam and Kenya in 1987, and attended the National Conference of Artists meetings in Dakar, Senegal (1984) and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1988). After a United Nations-funded trip to Africa, Biggers began to incorporate more abstract and symbolic images and patterns in his work, starting with the transitional works *Web of Life* (1960), *Red Barn Farm* (1960), and *Birth from the Sea* (1966).

Biggers undertook a number of major mural projects throughout his career and in his later works, increased the scale of abstract iconography and began to incorporate quilted patterns in his murals. He produced a number of murals in Houston buildings, including *Family Unity* (1974-1978), *Quilting Party* (1980-1981), *Song of the Drinking Gourds* (1987), *East Texas Patchwork* (1987), and a mural honoring Christia V. Adair, one of Houston's most important civil rights leaders.

Biggers returned to Gastonia in 1990, and was commissioned to complete two major mural projects. He completed *Ascension* and *Origins* at the Winston-Salem State University library in North Carolina in 1991, and painted *House of the Turtle* and *Tree House* at Hampton University that same year. In 1994, he drew the illustrations for Maya Angelou's poem "Our Grandmothers," but suffered from declining health in the late 1990s. John Biggers died in 2001.

**Scope and Content Note**

The collection consists of the papers of John Biggers from 1950-2001. The papers include correspondence, photographs, printed material, professional materials, subject files, printed material, writings, and audiovisual material. The materials document his entire professional career, starting with his work at Hampton Institute, but the bulk of the material relates to his work at Texas Southern University. Correspondence includes Biggers' personal and professional correspondence with friends, colleagues, and former students especially documenting his relationship with mentor, Viktor Lowenfeld (1903-1960); his work as founder and dean of the Art Department at Texas Southern University; and his work as a muralist. The photographs and slides consist primarily of images Biggers used while researching and composing his murals, in addition to extensive documentation of his in-progress and finished works. Also included are photographs of events he attended or that were held in his honor and people involved in his life including friends, family, and colleagues.

Printed material contains information about or collected by John Biggers. Included are calendars, clippings, newsletters and annual reports, pamphlets and programs, periodicals, and promotional materials that highlight Biggers' life and work. Biggers' work as an artist and as an educator is further documented by his professional material. Documents relating to John Biggers' work as an artist and arts advocate include planning and promotional material from a number of public exhibitions of Biggers' work as well as handwritten research notes on African art; financial documents about loans and sales of his work; artwork and sketches by Biggers and other artists; as well as a significant amount of material from Biggers' tenure as the head of the Art Department at Texas Southern University in Houston. Subject files contain materials on topics such as community projects as well as other professional endeavors such as invitations for speaking and art project opportunities.

Writings contain works by both by John Biggers and by others including Olive Theisen. The writings by Biggers consist of notes and typescript corrections of two of Biggers' books, *Ananse: The Web of Life in Africa* (1979) and *Black Art in Houston: The Texas Southern University*
Experience (1978). Also included in Biggers' writings are shorter works such as lectures, abstracts, and eulogies. Writings by others consist of longer works written about Biggers and his artwork, as well as unpublished essays and typescripts collected and read by Biggers. Of particular note are three typescript editions of Olive Theisen's The Murals of John Thomas Biggers: American Muralist, African-American Artist, an extensive collection and analysis of Biggers' murals. In later published editions, Biggers is listed as a co-author of the work; in this finding aid, all drafts are described under Theisen for continuity. Also included in writings is a typescript for Tales of Aunt Dicy, an annotated collection of Biggers' drawings of folk tales, as well as other shorter essays on Biggers, including "John Biggers: American Muralist". There are also manuscripts of collected poetry, short stories, student essays, lectures, and an unidentified typescript on the Texas State University Arts Center. Audiovisual material consists of audiocassettes and VHS tapes of exhibits and commencement ceremonies as well as recordings on topics of interest to Biggers such as intrasound and animal rights.

Arrangement Note
Organized into 7 series: (1) Correspondence, (2) Photographs, (3) Printed materials, (4) Professional material, (5) Subject files, (6) Writings, and (7) Audiovisual materials.
Description of Series

Series 1: Correspondence, 1946-2009
Series 2: Photographs, 1942-1996
Series 3: Printed material, 1936-2005
  Subseries 4.1: Artist materials, 1951-2003
  Subseries 4.2: Teaching materials, 1943-1999
Series 5: Subject files, 1945-1997
Series 7: Audiovisual materials, 1994-1999
Series 1
Correspondence, 1946-2009
Boxes 1-9

Scope and Content Note
The series consists of Biggers' personal and professional correspondence with friends, colleagues, and former students from 1946-2009. Primarily, the correspondence from 1946-1948 consists of letters from the military on allowances, pensions, and educational reimbursement. Of note is correspondence to and from Viktor Lowenfeld, an Austrian artist who mentored Biggers at the Hampton Institute in Virginia and later at Pennsylvania State University. There is a large amount of administrative correspondence from the 1960s and 1970s relating to Biggers' position as founder and head of the Art Department at Texas Southern University. These letters document topics including curriculum issues, conferences, and art exhibitions around the university. Also included throughout the series is a significant amount of material relating to Biggers' status as a "distinguished alumnus" of The Pennsylvania State University. There is also a large amount of correspondence with Olive Jensen Theisen from the 1990s, an Art Education professor and a friend of Biggers who published multiple books on his murals and drawings. There are also a number of condolence cards and letters sent to Hazel Biggers after John's death in 2001.

Arrangement Note
Arranged in chronological order.

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Series 2
Photographs, 1942-1996
Boxes 10-30, OP1 and OP5

Scope and Content Note
The series consists of photographs of John Biggers' artwork, events he attended or that were held in his honor, and his friends, family and colleagues from 1942-1998. Included in the series are a number of photographs of Biggers' paintings, drawings, and sculpture. There are many photographs of John Biggers' murals, including photographs of incomplete murals in progress, finished products, and close-ups of mural details. There are also photographs documenting his painting process, which show Biggers and other artists as they were creating and painting murals. Also included are photographs of openings and exhibitions of Biggers' works as well as unidentified events in homes, front yards, and churches, and a few images depicting Biggers' foreign travels, especially to Ghana and Egypt. Most of the photographs of people are of John and Hazel Biggers, although there are other photographs of identified and unidentified people, including some friends of relatives of John and Hazel. There are also negatives and slides of many of the printed photographs.

Arrangement Note
Arranged by subject.

Artwork

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<td>African American dolls, undated</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>African art displayed in home, undated</td>
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<td>African art displayed outside and in garage, undated</td>
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<td>African art displayed on quilt, undated</td>
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<td>African artwork, undated [includes photographs of Biggers making sketches] [1 of 2]</td>
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<td>African humanoid sculptures, undated</td>
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<td>African maternity figures, undated [1 of 2]</td>
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<td>African statues (pedestal), undated</td>
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<td>Ashanti, Yoruba, and Zulu figures, 1982-1983</td>
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<td>Biggers collection of African art [photographer: Johnson, Harvey] undated</td>
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<td>Bird sculpture, undated</td>
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<td>Carved ivory [?], undated</td>
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**Events**

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Scope and Content Note
The series consists of printed material about or collected by John Biggers from 1936-2005. It includes calendars, clippings, newsletters and annual reports, pamphlets and programs, periodicals, and promotional materials. Calendars included in the series contain artwork by John Biggers or by other African American artists such as Paul Goodnight. Leaves from the work, *Lithographs for our Grandmothers* include title pages and illustrations from the work, written by Maya Angelou. Clippings include articles about John Biggers and his work as well as annotated articles and articles that influenced his work. Newsletters and annual reports cover a number of organizations that Biggers was involved with including the Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama, the Fine Arts Society, the National Hampton Alumni Association, and Houston Municipal Art Commission. Pamphlets and programs document a number of exhibits, organizations, awards, and events. Periodicals contain articles about Biggers, including images of his artwork, or are otherwise annotated. Promotional material includes flyers, news releases, invitations, and other advertisements that highlight exhibits, lectures, receptions, and organizations.

Arrangement Note
Arranged by printed material type, then in chronological or alphabetical order.

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Newsletters and annual reports


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Annual report, Fine Arts Society, fifty-second annual report of the president, 1977


Annual report, Houston Municipal Art Commission, 1965-1966


Annual report, Symbols of our Best, Pennsylvania State Alumni Association, Spring 1989

Annual report, Spirits Rising, commemorative report, Bennett College, 1997

Annual report, University of Houston-downtown, President's report to the community, 1998

Annual report, Writers Roundup, Theta Sigma Phi, 14th annual report, 1962

Newsletter, Amistad Reports, Amistad Research Center, volume X, number 2, May 1996

Newsletter, Art, etc., E. L. Foney, volume 1, number 1, Spring 1987

Newsletter, Art News, Texas Southern University Art Department, volume 1, numbers 3-4, volume 2, 1983

Newsletter, Artfully Yours, Black Heritage Gallery, undated

Newsletter, The Brandywine Brief, Brandywine Workshop, volume 1, issue 1; volume 2, issue 3; volume 3, issue 4, 1991-1993

Newsletter, Center, Houston Center for Photography, March-April 1991

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Pamphlet, Museum of Fine Arts of Houston/Baltimore Museum of Arts, Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement, February-September 1991

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Pamphlet, Texas Historical Commission, Rosenwald Schools in Texas, 1920-1930, undated

Pamphlet, Texas Southern University (Houston, Texas), Undergraduate International Curriculum Development Project, Seminar on African Art and Dance, December 8, 1980

Pamphlet, Texas Southern University (Houston, Texas)/Benteler-Morgan Galleries, Haiti and Belize: Photographs by Earlie Hudnall, Jr., March 6-April 5, 1992

Pamphlet, Transco Energy Company, A Selection of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century American Watercolors, undated

Pamphlet, Two Centuries of Black American Art, 1976-1977

Pamphlet, University of North Florida (Jacksonville, Florida), William Charles Henderson, II, March 28-April 15, 1977

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37  37  Program, Texas Southern University (Houston, Texas), *Eugene Grigsby exhibition*, August-September, 1966

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38  8  Program, Theta Sigma Phi (Austin, Texas), *14th Annual Writers Roundup*, September 29, 1962


38 10  Program, United Transport Service Employees (UTSE-CIO), Two Murals by John T. Biggers, November 3, 1946

38 11  Program, University of Arkansas Multicultural Center (Fayetteville, Arkansas), *Celebrating John Biggers*, September 13, 1995


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Encore, 1973

Ethiopia Observer, volume 11, number 2, undated

Fayetteville Museum of Art, undated

Folk Art, volume 25, number 3, fall 2000

Folk Art Messenger, volume 13, number 1, winter/spring 2000

Freedomways, volume 9, number 3, summer 1969; volume 20, number 3, 1980

Gaston Seasons, volume 3, number 1, spring 2000

Hampton Alumni Magazine, volume 125, number 2, winter 1992; volume 129, number 2, spring 1998; volume 130, number 1, winter 1999; volume 132, number 1, spring 2001;

Hampton University 125th Anniversary Scrapbook, 1993

Harlem's Culture, volume 1, number 1, fall 2000

History, the Bible, and the Blackmen, undated

Horizons, volume 18, number 1, 2005

The Humble Way, volume 7, number 3, 1968 [2 copies]

Iam, volume 13, number 12, 1974

Images, volume 3, number 2, 1999

Impression: A Magazine of the Graphic Arts 1958

In the Arts, volume 1, number 3, 1983

Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, number 1, 1981

The International Review of African American Art, volume 11, number 4, 1994; volume 16, number 2, 1999; volume 19, number 3, 2004; volume 21, number 1, 2006; volume 21, number 2, 2007

Jet, volume 99, number 9, February 12, 2001

Journal of African Civilizations, volume 1, number 2, November 1979; volume 3, number 2, November 1981; volume 4, number 2, November 1982

Life, May 1997

Local Favorites, volume 1, number 1, undated

Mainstream America, volume 2, number 2, February 1983; volume 3, number 2, April 1984

Menen, volume 12, number 10-11, September-October 1968

Midnight Sun 3, volume 2, number 1, April 1976
Minnesota Monthly, volume 30, number 8, August 1996
Minority Voices, volume 1, number 1, spring 1977
Museum and Arts Houston, May 1992; November 1992; October 1993
National Geographic, volume 167, number 3, March 1985
National Sculpture Review, volume 21, number 3, fall 1972
Newsweek, volume 65, number 8, February 19, 1990; volume 68, number 13, September 23, 1991
Nigeria: A Quarterly Magazine of General Interest, number 56, 1958
Northwest, volume 18, number 9, September 1987
Our Texas, summer 1995
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Parabola: The Magazine of Myth and Tradition, volume 18, number 1, February 1993; volume 19, number 1, February 1994; volume 20, number 1, February 1995
Penn Stater, volume 82, number 6, July/August 1995
Perspective, November/December 1995
Plataforma 1, undated
Publishers Weekly, volume 242, number 15, April 10, 1995
Quilts, number 3780, undated
Research in African Literatures, volume 12, number 1, 3, 4, 1981
Return to the Source, volume 1, number 1, March 1982
Shawensis: The Shaw University Magazine, summer 1969; spring 1970
Smithsonian, volume 7, number 12, March 1977; volume 24, number 6, September 1993; volume 26, number 12, March 1996
Southern Living, volume 25, number 6, June 1990
Southwest Airlines Magazine, volume 9, number 9, April 1980
Southwest Media Review, volume 3, spring 1985
Southwestern Historical Quarterly, volume 76, number 4, April 1973; volume 95, number 1, July 1991
Sunday Post, supplemental, July 1970
Terra: The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, volume 26, number 5, May/June 1988
The Texas Architect, volume 14, number 1, May 1964
The Texas Artist, volume 1, number 1, July 1954
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Texas Journal of Ideas, History and Culture, volume 18, number 1, fall/winter 1995
Texas Monthly, volume 17, number 5, May 1989
44 4  *Texas Parks and Wildlife*, volume 28, number 11, November 1970; volume 29, number 6, June 1971

44 5  *Texas Trends in Art Education*, volume 2, number 8, fall 1983

44 6  *This is Malawi*, volume 5, number 1, January 1969


44 8  *Trends*, volume 2, number 8, Fall 1983

44 9  *The Unesco Courier*, number 11, November 1958

44 10 *University Bulletin*, volume 15, number 4, spring 1963

44 11  *Uraeus: The Journal of Unconscious Life*, volume 2, number 1, winter 1980; volume 2, number 3, 1982; volume 3, number 1, summer 1985

44 12  *Urbane*, summer 1992

44 13 *U.S. News and World Report*, volume 121, number 20, November 18, 1996


**Promotional Material**

44 15  1943-1969

45 1  1970-1979

OP4 12  1976-1995

45 2  1980-1989 [1 of 5]


46 1  1980-1989 [5 of 5]

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46 2  1990-1999 [1 of 6]


46 4  1990-1999 [3 of 6]

46 5  1990-1999 [4 of 6]

47 1  1990-1999 [5 of 6]

47 2  1990-1999 [6 of 6]

47 3  2000-2011 [1 of 2]

47 4  2000-2011 [2 of 2]

47 5  undated [1 of 2]

47 6  undated [2 of 2]

**Sheet music**

47 7  Manoloff, Nick [arrangement], *Git on Board (Negro Spiritual Song)*, 1936
Series 4
Professional materials, 1921-2005 (bulk 1962-2001)
Boxes 48-55, OP3-OP5, OP6, OP8, XOP1

Scope and Content Note
The series consists of John Biggers' professional files from 1921-2005. It documents his work as a professional artist as well as his career as an educator and administrator from 1921-2005. Material relating to John Biggers' work as an artist and arts advocate includes planning and promotional material from a number of public exhibitions of Biggers' work, especially the exhibition *The Art of John Biggers: View from the Upper Room* in 1995. There are also handwritten research notes on African art, along with financial documents about the loan and sale of both African sculpture he collected for himself and others and Biggers' paintings. There are also sketches and drawings by Biggers as well as other artists. The series also contains awards and honors given to Biggers by universities and civic institutions. Material relating to Biggers' work as a teacher and university administrator includes classwork by his students, teaching aids, and reports from his time as Dean of the Art Department of Texas Southern University. There is also instructional material and information about former students as well as honorary degrees and commencement ceremony materials.

Arrangement Note
Organized into two subseries: (4.1) Artist materials and (4.2) Teaching
Subseries 4.1
Artist materials, 1951-2003
Boxes 48-53, OP 45-49, 57-60, 64-65, XOP1

Scope and Content Note
The subseries consists of material relating to John Biggers' work as an artist and arts advocate, 1951-2003. The subseries includes planning and promotional material from a number of public exhibitions of Biggers' work, and there is an especially large amount of material relating to the exhibition *The Art of John Biggers: View from the Upper Room*, which opened in April 1995 at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston as well as by other artists and also from children. The subseries also contains Biggers' handwritten research notes on African art, along with a number of financial documents about the loan and sale of both African sculpture and Biggers' paintings. Also included are a number of awards and honors given to Biggers by universities and civic institutions.

Arrangement Note
Arranged in alphabetical order.

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| 50   | 36   | Program, art exhibit, Texas Southern University (Houston, Texas), March 1-15, [?]
<p>| 50   | 37   | Program, 7th Annual Meeting, National Conference of Artists, April 16-18, 1995 |
| 50   | 38   | Program, &quot;Welcome Home, Biggers!&quot; 1995 |
| 51   | 1    | Project outline, &quot;Mural Masters and Monuments,&quot; April 1989 |
| 51   | 2    | Promotional, packet on &quot;The Art of John Biggers: View from the Upper Room,&quot; 1995 |
| 51   | 4    | Promotional summary, &quot;A Celebration of Life&quot; (Minneapolis, Minnesota), 1994-1996 |
| 51   | 5    | Proposal, Portsmouth, Virginia Civic Arts Program, 1988 [2 copies] |
| 51   | 6    | Prospectus, &quot;Art in Public Places&quot; (Austin Civic Center, Austin, Texas), June 10, 1988 |
| 51   | 7    | Published mural photographs; Biggers, John, undated |
| 51   | 8    | Reception, Dr. Biggers Project, YWCA of Houston, November 15, 1992 |
| 51   | 9    | Requisitions, purchases, and receipts, 1962-2001 [1 of 5] |
| 52   | 1    | Research notes, undated [1 of 8] |
| 52   | 2    | Research notes, undated [2 of 8] |
| 52   | 3    | Research notes, undated [3 of 8] |
| 52   | 4    | Research notes, undated [4 of 8] |
| 52   | 5    | Research notes, undated [5 of 8] |
| 52   | 6    | Research notes, undated [6 of 8] |
| 53   | 1    | Research notes, undated [7 of 8] |
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| 53   | 3    | Resumes and curriculum vitae; Biggers, John, 1924-1999 |
| 53   | 4    | Resumes and curriculum vitae; other artists, 1942-1991 |
| 53   | 5    | &quot;Return to the Upper Room,&quot; undated |
| 53   | 6    | Royalty statements, 1958, 1963, 1984 |
| 53   | 7    | Sales brochure, Premier Artworks (San Antonio, Texas), undated |</p>
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<td>Writers Roundup, Theta Sigma Pi, September 29, 1962</td>
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Subseries 4.2
Teaching materials, 1943-1999
Boxes 53-55, OP 50-51, 56

Scope and Content Note
The subseries consists of material relating to Biggers’ work as a teacher and university
administrator from 1943-1999. There is a significant amount of material from Biggers' tenure as
the head of the Art Department at Texas Southern University in Houston, a program he founded,
and there is also instructional material and biographical information about former students.
Instructional records include art appreciation transparencies as well as notes by students. The
subseries also contains a number of honorary doctoral degrees bestowed upon Biggers from
Hampton University, Pennsylvania State University, and North Carolina State University as well
as material relating to the commencement ceremonies at which they were presented. There is
a small amount of material relating to National Endowment for the Humanities grants that he
applied for as well as other grants including Preparing for Texas in the 21st Century and the
National Endowment for the Arts.

Arrangement Note
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<td>Catalog, Massachusetts College of Art, 1993-1995</td>
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<td>Information, Master of Fine Arts program, Texas Southern University, 1980-1981</td>
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Information, new Art Department curriculum, Texas Southern University, undated

Membership materials, Society of Distinguished Alumni, Pennsylvania State University, 1988-1989

Memorandum, faculty assembly meeting (Texas Southern University), August 28, 1979

Memorandum, recommendations for Art Department (Hampton University), October 2, 1991

Minutes, Society of Distinguished Alumni, Pennsylvania State University, Planning Committee, April 3, 1989

Monthly and semester budget (Mendoza, Josie E.), undated

"My Favorite Place" (Texas Monthly), undated

National Black College Alumni, Hall of Fame proceedings, September 1990

National Endowment for the Humanities grant application, 1993-1995 [1 of 2]


National Humanities Faculty Visitation (John Biggers), February 1974

Nellie Stone Johnson scholarship program, University of Minnesota, 1988

North Carolina Artworks for State Buildings contest, 1996

Program notes, John Bigger's Art, undated

Proposal, Cultural Arts Center, Texas Southern University, undated

Proposed research project; Lacy, Laura J., undated

Prospective student bulletin, Texas Southern University, undated

Receipts for travel and printing, 1980-1984

Resumes and curriculum vitae, former students, 1946-1978

"Sister Madonna" sculpture, notes, undated

"Teacher Education in Music," Music Educators National Conference, October 1970

Teacher's guide, African American art, undated

Teaching materials, overhead transparencies, 1989 [1 of 2]

Teaching materials, overhead transparencies, 1989 [2 of 2]

"The Ten Virtues of the Egyptian Mystery System," undated

Transcripts, Pennsylvania State University, 1947-1953

University museum project, Texas Southern University, November 1997
Series 5  
Subject files, 1945-1997  
Boxes 56-57, OP5  

Scope and Content Note  
The series consists of John Biggers' research on topics such as community projects as well as other professional endeavors such as invitations for speaking and art project opportunities from 1945-1997. Documents from organizations such as First Congregational United Church of Christ; Kid Care, Inc.; Washington Project for the Arts; and Hampton University are included. The series also includes research files on topics such as African American artists, writers, and African art, as well as collected materials on other artists and academics such as Maya Angelou and Edmund Gaither.

Arrangement Note  
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57 25 North Carolina Arts Council, 1989
57 26 Northeast Texas Community College, 1989-1990
57 27 Penland School, 1989-1990
57 28 Practical Science Institute, 1978
57 29 Riverside General Hospital, 1967
OP5 3 Sunflower painting to Hazel from Lindsay, collage
57 30 Washington Project for the Arts, 1989-1990
57 31 Webber-Brooks family reunion, 1989
Series 6
Writings, 1954-1998
Boxes 58-62, OP5

Scope and Content Note
The series consists of writings both by John Biggers and by others including Olive Theisen who wrote extensively on John Biggers. The writings by Biggers consist of notes and corrected typescript drafts of two of Biggers books, Ananse: The Web of Life in Africa (1979) and Black Art in Houston: The Texas Southern University Experience (1978). Also included in Biggers writings are lectures, abstracts, and eulogies. Writings by others consist of works written about Biggers and his artwork, as well as unpublished essays and typescripts collected and read by Biggers. Of particular note are three typescript editions of Olive Theisen's The Murals of John Thomas Biggers: American Muralist, African-American Artist, an extensive analysis of Biggers murals. In later published editions, Biggers is listed as a co-author of this work but in the finding aid, the work is described only under Theisen for continuity. There is also a typescript for Tales of Aunt Dicy, by J. Mason Brewer, an annotated collection of Biggers' drawings of folk tales, as well as other essays on Biggers, including "John Biggers: American Muralist." Also included by other authors are manuscripts of collected poetry, short stories, student essays, lectures, and an unidentified typescript on the Texas State University Arts Center.

Arrangement Note
Arranged alphabetically by author of work.

Writings by Biggers

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<td>Hales, Haywood and Emma Moore, family journal, 1988</td>
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<td>Hazard, Peggy, &quot;Harriet Powers: Afro-American Quiltmaker,&quot; 1990</td>
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<td>&quot;The History of a Family Quilt,&quot; undated</td>
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<td>Holloway, Anita, &quot;Turtles and Birds,&quot; Animals in Two Murals by John Biggers, 1998</td>
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<td>Ikeda, Daisaku, SGI President, 1989, undated</td>
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<td>Interview with Christia Adair, undated</td>
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<td>John Biggers: A Cultural Legacy, retrospective from 1950-1992</td>
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<td>King, Richard D., The Black Dot, Part III, June 1985</td>
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<td>Lawrence, Bette Ann D., poems, 1994</td>
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<td>Lee, Grace Watts, poems, 1990, 1995, undated</td>
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<td>Lincoln light excerpts 1945-1950, Lincoln Academy, 1977</td>
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<td>Mazrui, Ali A., &quot;Who was Albert Schweitzer?: An African Perspective,&quot; undated</td>
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<td>McCurry, Howard, Dead Aim Backwards, 1980</td>
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<td>Moxley, Mary Elta, unidentified essay, 1991</td>
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<td>Mullen, Harryette Romell, Gender and the Subjugated Body: Readings of Race, Subjectivity, and Difference in the Construction of Slave Narratives, March 1990</td>
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<td>Mundy, Rawls, &quot;Ruth Russell Williams Recaptures Black Folk Art,&quot; undated</td>
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<td>&quot;Mural: Salt Marsh,&quot; undated</td>
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<td>&quot;The Negro Texan#to 1900,&quot; Institute of Texan Cultures (San Antonio, Texas), 1974</td>
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<td>Poems by Students at Ryan Middle School, Artist-in-Residence Program, undated</td>
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<td>Popoff, Irmis B., The Enneagramma of the Man of Unity, September 19, 1981</td>
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<td>Prather, Patricia Smith, &quot;John Biggers' Gift to Posterity,&quot; undated</td>
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<td>Rodgers, Kenneth G., &quot;John Biggers: Probing the Family of Man,&quot; undated</td>
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<td>Scippio, Annette, &quot;The Contemplation of Nature by the Contemporary Artist, John Biggers, as Depicted in His Mural 'Origins',&quot; 1990</td>
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<td>&quot;The Shamans Coltrane &amp; Matisse: The Will to Love,&quot; undated</td>
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<td>Stewart, Ruth, speech for dedication of the John Biggers Art Center Assembly, 1995</td>
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<td>Theisen, Olive Jensen, <em>John Thomas Biggers; American Muralist, African-American Artist</em>, draft with handwritten comments, undated</td>
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<td>Thesis on black conservatism, undated</td>
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<td>Torry, Frank, &quot;Once More,&quot; undated</td>
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<td>&quot;Two Poems for Karen,&quot; Holy Week, 1995</td>
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<td>Unidentified biography of John Biggers, undated</td>
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<td>Unidentified manuscript [Texas Southern University Arts Center], undated</td>
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<td>Unidentified typescript [Texas Southern University Arts Center], undated</td>
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<td>Unidentified typescript on John Biggers, undated</td>
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<td>Wade, Melvin, &quot;'Justin' to the Change: Traditional Agricultural Practices among Freed Black Farmers in East Texas, 1865-1900,&quot; 1986</td>
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<td>Wardlaw, Alvia J., Review of <em>Black Art in Houston</em>, 1985</td>
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<td>Weems, John Edward, TSU Art Book, Errata #1, 1977</td>
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<td>Weisman, Donald L., introduction to <em>Black Art in Houston</em>, undated</td>
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<td>&quot;Welcome to Leopoldville,&quot; September 1928</td>
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<td>&quot;When a Child Remembers,&quot; poem, 1968</td>
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Series 7  
Audiovisual materials, 1994-1999  
Box AV1

Scope and Content Note  
The series consists of audiovisual material collected by John Biggers, including audiocassettes and VHS tapes that document exhibits and commencement ceremonies as well as recordings on topics of interest to John Biggers such as intrasound and animal rights.

Arrangement Note  
Arranged in alphabetical order.

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<td>Albany Museum of Art: &quot;Into the Light,&quot; The Extraordinary Art of Ethiopia, 1999 [original: VHS]</td>
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<td>Bennett, Carol, Animal Connection conference call, 1994 [original: audiocassette]</td>
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<td>Biggers, John, exhibit at the Museum of Fine Art, Houston, undated [original: audiocassette]</td>
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<td>The Gandhi-Hamer-King Center for the Study of Religion and Democratic Renewal, undated [original: VHS]</td>
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| AV1 | -      | William Pajaud, Journeys of the Heart, undated [original: VHS]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id tjch4] |
| AV1 | -      | Worth, Victor, intrasound testimonials, undated [original: audiocassette] |