

THRASH, DOX, 1892-1965.

Dox Thrash collection, 1920-1966

Emory University
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Thrash, Dox, 1892-1965.
Title: Dox Thrash collection, 1920-1966
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 1275
Extent: .25 linear ft. (1 box) and 1 oversized paper (OP)
Abstract: Small collection of materials relating to African American artist Dox Thrash including correspondence, photographs, printed material, and other documents.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Source

Purchase, 2013.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Dox Thrash collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by Sarah Quigley, October 2013.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

Dox Thrash (1892-1965), African American artist and printmaker, was born to Gus and Ophelia Thrash in Griffin, Georgia. He left school after fourth grade and traveled around the United States in his teens, eventually settling in Chicago, Illinois, in 1911. He worked as an elevator operator and in 1914, enrolled in night courses at the Art Institute of Chicago. After the United States entered World War I in 1917, Thrash joined the Army. He served in France with the 365th Infantry Regiment, 183rd Brigade, 92nd Division, also known as Buffalo Soldiers, the first American soldiers to fight in the war. He resumed his art training in 1918 after returning to the United States and graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1923.

Thrash again traveled the country from 1923-1925, eventually settling Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He took a job as a janitor and worked on his art in his spare time, gaining local recognition due in part to his membership in the Tra Club of Philadelphia. From 1936-1939, Thrash worked for the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration, supervising the Graphic Division for three years. During this time, Thrash invented the carborundum mezzotint printmaking technique, which he called Opheliagraph printing in honor of his mother. Thrash is best known for his work in this medium, a lithographic printing process that uses a carbon-based abrasive on copper plates to create a print image in tones from pale gray to deep black.

In 1940, Thrash married Edna McAllister. The couple had no children. Thrash died in 1965 at the age of 72.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of materials relating to Dox Thrash from 1920-1966 including correspondence, photographs, printed material and a small number of other documents. Correspondence primarily contains letters sent to Thrash from the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project regarding his work for the organization. Other correspondence is from universities, art museums, and artist organizations regarding the exhibition or purchase of Thrash's work. One such letter, from the Contemporary Art of the American Negro jury committee and signed by Hale Woodruff, discusses concerns about all-Negro exhibitions inadvertently encouraging segregation. There is also one posthumous letter addressed to Thrash's wife Edna.

The collection also contains two photographs of Thrash and several newspaper clippings documenting his work as an artist. Printed material also includes a brochure from an exhibit of African American artists that included Thrash and a broadside of "Art Outlook" on which he sketched two pencil drawings. Additional documents include an application to the Artist's Equity Bureau, a "blue form" biographical application to work as an examination aircraft painter, and a typescript of "The Art of Opheliagraph Prints".

Arrangement Note

Arranged by record type.

Container List

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Artists Equity Bureau application, 1949
1	2	"Blue form," biographical application to work as an examination aircraft painter, 1944
1	3	Correspondence, 1920-1966
1	4	Photographs, no date
OP1	-	Printed material: broadside, "Art Outlook," 1945 [includes two pencil sketches by Thrash on the front]
1	5	Printed material: brochure, "Exhibition of Paintings by Negro Artists of America," Atlanta University (Atlanta, Georgia), 1942
1	6	Printed material: newspaper clippings, circa 1933-1945
1	7	Thrash, Dox, "The Art of Opheliagraph Prints," typescript, no date
