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Downing, Joseph Dudley, 1925-2007 (MSS 565)

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Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

Descriptive Inventory

MSS 565 DOWNING, Joseph Dudley, 1925-2007

14 boxes. 215 folders. 4,572 items. 1925-2010. Originals or photocopies

SC2013.127.1

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Joseph Dudley Downing was born on 15 November 1925 in Tompkinsville, Kentucky, to his parents Aldridge Clifton and Katie Burton Goodman Downing. He spent his childhood in Horse Cave, Kentucky, where he received his education and graduated valedictorian in 1943. After high school, Downing became an artillery observer in the army receiving a Bronze Star for his service in France during World War II. In 1945 Downing enrolled at Western Kentucky University, where art professor Ivan Wilson encouraged his artistic endeavors. However, respecting his parents' wishes, Downing pursued a degree in optometry by attending Northern Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago. He continued his art training by enrolling in classes at the Chicago Art Institute. Upon graduating in 1950, Downing decided to take a three-month trip to Paris, France, a place he had briefly seen during his military service. He fell in love with the city during his visit and became increasingly interested in pursuing art as a career. Downing decided to stay in Paris, and he continued to live in France for the remainder of his life.

Downing gave credit to the unique coloring and shapes of his abstract works to his childhood spent playing in the caves of his hometown and the ubiquitous barns found on the southcentral Kentucky landscape. The Kentucky countryside inspired Downing's works that were displayed museums and galleries around the world from the Louvre in Paris to the Kentucky Museum in Bowling Green. He was known for his unique use of color and the unusual material on which he painted which included old barn doors, stretched leather, chicken bones, and rescued provincial court documents. Throughout his career, Downing maintained his ties to Kentucky, keeping in close contact with his family and bringing his works back for galleries in his hometown and in local museums.

Downing passed away on 29 December 2007 in Menerbes, France, where he lived for 40 years. Memorial services and art showings were given in his honor in Kentucky and Meberbes. As was requested by Downing, his ashes were distributed in the two places he loved, Menerbes, France, and Horse Cave, Kentucky.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection is made up of various forms of documentation about the life and work of Joseph Dudley Downing, chiefly created by his brother, Dero Goodman Downing. The first four boxes contain information concerning exhibitions of Downing's works both in the United States and abroad from 1952 to 2008. The documents include invitations, invitation lists, inventories, financial records, and some correspondence. Lists of artwork shown in exhibits and records of sales transactions made to patrons are also included in the boxes.

Boxes 5-7 contain publications about Downing and his art. Box 5 includes magazines in which Downing, or one his exhibits, were featured. Box 6 contains clippings from newspapers around the world about all aspects of Downing's artistic career from 1952 to his death. Box 7 includes articles and information from various artistic publications.

Boxes 8-12, contain correspondence between Dero Downing and patrons of Joe Downing's work. The subject of the letters chiefly concerns business affairs, including financial transactions and shipment of purchases. However, some of the correspondents are friendly and contain some personal matters. Patrons of Downing's range from local art galleries to art enthusiasts on Wall Street, all of whom maintained correspondence with Dero Downing.

Box 13 contains personal records and biographical information about Joe Downing from his birth in 1925, to his years in the military, to records of his memorial service in 2007. Biographies and accounts of his life are represented in this box in the form of dedications, articles, and photographs.

Box 14 has two tapes that narrate the work of Downing that aired on the radio in 1982 and on television in 1989.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	Exhibits	1952-1995	306 items
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	All Kentucky artists	1983	6 items
Folder 3	Arnaud	1952-1969	14 items
Folder 4	Avignon	2001	8 items
Folder 5	Bellint	1980-1982	5 items
Folder 6	Cade Denise	1986-1993	33 items
Folder 7	Capitol Arts Center	1983-1984	22 items

Folder 8	Citizen's National Bank	1987-1988	4 items
Folder 9	Foster/White	1987-1988	18 items
Folder 10	Galerie Jaqueter	1984-1994	29 items
Folder 11	Galerie Kutter	1983-1995	5 items
Folder 12	Gimpel Weitzenhoffer	1978	4 items
Folder 13	Gordes, France	1997	1 item
Folder 14	Headley-Whitney Museum	1983-1991	46 items
Folder 15	Headley-Whitney Museum	1984	18 items
Folder 16	Horse Cave Theatre	1980	55 items
Folder 17	Horse Cave Theatre	1980	37 items
BOX 2	Exhibits	1982-2008	262 items
Folder 1	Huntington Galleries – Correspondence	1985-1988	42 items
Folder 2	Huntington Galleries – Miscellaneous	1986	21 items
Folder 3	Liberty	1990-1995	11 items
Folder 4	Menerbes	2006	25 items
Folder 5	Metz	1987-1988	10 items
Folder 6	Owensboro Museum of Fine Art – Correspondence	1980-1982	55 items
Folder 7	Owensboro Museum of Fine Art – Correspondence	1993-2008	63 items
Folder 8	Owensboro Museum of Fine Art – Brochures and articles	1982-1996	30 items
Folder 9	Owensboro Museum of Fine Art – Booklets	1987-1991	5 items

BOX 3	Exhibits	1969-1989	166 items
Folder 1	Vanderbilt University – Correspondence	1986-1987	13 items
Folder 2	Vanderbilt University – Invitation lists	1987	2 items
Folder 3	Vanderbilt University – Miscellaneous	1987	10 items
Folder 4	WKU, The Paintings of Joe Downing	1969	15 items
Folder 5	WKU, 1988 – Correspondence	1988-1989	82 items
Folder 6	WKU, 1988 – Invitation list	1988	2 items
Folder 7	WKU, 1988 – Inventory & Misc.	1988-1989	42 items
BOX 4	Exhibits	1962-2006	346 items
Folder 1	WKU, 1993 – Correspondence	1989-1993	80 items
Folder 2	WKU, 1993 – Inventory & Misc.	1993	45 items
Folder 3	WKU, 2000 – Correspondence	1998-2000	59 items
Folder 4	WKU, 2000 – Correspondence	2000	80 items
Folder 5	WKU, 2000 – Correspondence	2000-2001	37 items
Folder 6	WKU, 2000 – Miscellaneous	2000	29 items
Folder 7	Miscellaneous Exhibits	1962-2006	16 items
BOX 5	Magazines	1984-2006	14 items
Folder 1	FAIC 84	1984	1 item
Folder 2	Magazine Beaux Arts	1984	1 item
Folder 3	Le Nouvel Observateur	1984	1 item
Folder 4	Vogue Decoration	1987	1 item
Folder 5	Cimaise	1988	1 item

Folder 6	European Travel and Life	1988	1 item
Folder 7	The Fanlight	1988	1 item
Folder 8	Alumni	1992	1 item
Folder 9	The Fanlight	1993	1 item
Folder 10	Alumni	1993	1 item
Folder 11	L'Oeil	1993	1 item
Folder 12	Normandie	1994	1 item
Folder 13	Normandie	1995	1 item
Folder 14	Artension	2006	1 item
BOX 6	Newspaper Clippings	1937-1985	328 items
Folder 1	Newspaper clippings	1937-1969	71 items
Folder 2	Newspaper clippings	1966-1974	78 items
Folder 3	Newspaper clippings	1975-1982	56 items
Folder 4	Newspaper clippings	1983-1985	19 items
Folder 5	Newspaper clippings	1986-2001	29 items
Folder 6	Newspaper clippings	n.d.	39 items
Folder 7	Newspaper clippings – Foreign	n.d.	35 items
Folder 8	French biography	n.d.	1 item
BOX 7	Articles	1983-2008	130 items
Folder 1	Art International 1983	1983-1986	4 items
Folder 2	L'Oeil	1984-1993	18 items
Folder 3	Cimaise	1986	9 items

Folder 4	Back Home in Kentucky	1988	1 item
Folder 5	Sent	1989-1993	23 items
Folder 6	Artension	2006	5 items
Folder 7	Daily News	1995-1996	27 items
Folder 8	After death	2008	12 items
Folder 9	Miscellaneous	n.d.	27 items
Folder 10	Booklets	n.d.	4 items
BOX 8	Correspondence A-C	1964-2009	640 items
Folder 1	General A	1964-1994	11 items
Folder 2	Acknowledgement letters	2007-2008	134 items
Folder 3	Akers	1982-2009	132 items
Folder 4	Alexander	1986-1988	10 items
Folder 5	Anthione	1980-2007	52 items
Folder 6	Atkins	1988-1993	14 items
Folder 7	General B	1965-1997	23 items
Folder 8	Begley	1985-1986	8 items
Folder 9	Belote	1985	2 items
Folder 10	Berry	1979-1984	10 items
Folder 11	Bettman	1980-1988	24 items
Folder 12	Biddle	1987-2006	37 items
Folder 13	Bingham	1980-1994	56 items
Folder 14	Boone	1980-1988	7 items
Folder 15	Bowling	1980-1984	9 items

Folder 16	Brinkley	1983-1984	4 items
Folder 17	Brown	1983	2 items
Folder 18	Burke	1980-1985	9 items
Folder 19	General C	1964-2009	21 items
Folder 20	Cahen	1997-2005	15 items
Folder 21	Callis	2004	2 items
Folder 22	Cannon	1986	1 item
Folder 23	Cervoine	1982-1989	4 items
Folder 24	Chelf	1988	2 items
Folder 25	Cherry	1983-1992	22 items
Folder 26	In Cincinnati	1996	4 items
Folder 27	Cole	1983-1995	8 items
Folder 28	Coleman	1987-1988	4 items
Folder 29	Cox	1977-1983	11 items
Folder 30	Coxe	2007	2 items
BOX 9	Correspondence D-G	1964-2008	456 items
Folder 1	General D	1969-2007	19 items
Folder 2	Dear	1987-1998	21 items
Folder 3	Dixon	1981-1984	5 items
Folder 4	Downing	1969-2005	118 items
Folder 5	Ducketts	1982-1992	4 items
Folder 6	Dysard	1980-1986	4 items

Folder 7	General E	1988-2008	16 items
Folder 8	Emery Worldwide	1994	4 items
Folder 9	General F	1964-1998	8 items
Folder 10	Ferguson	2003	12 items
Folder 11	Forgy	1980-1991	12 items
Folder 12	Fossard	1981-1984	11 items
Folder 13	Fromm	1981-1984	5 items
Folder 14	General G	1978-2011	26 items
Folder 15	Gerard	1980-1986	6 items
Folder 16	Gesling & Dysard	1983-1998	26 items
Folder 17	Given	1969	9 items
Folder 18	Goodman, Joe	1964-2008	45 items
Folder 19	Goodman, Julian	1964-2008	32 items
Folder 20	Gray	1980-1998	58 items
Folder 21	Gunn	1975-1997	15 items
BOX 10	Correspondence H-L	1964-2010	456 items
Folder 1	General H	1964-2009	51 items
Folder 2	Heath	1968-1969	6 items
Folder 3	Helm	1980-1988	10 items
Folder 4	Huntington Bancshares Inc.	1987-1988	10 items
Folder 5	General J	1978-2010	8 items
Folder 6	Jarriot	1980-1996	10 items
Folder 7	General K	1982-2001	24 items

Folder 8	Kendall	1984-2005	51 items
Folder 9	Kentucky Highlands Museum	1986	5 items
Folder 10	Kentucky Homes & Gardens	2009	7 items
Folder 11	Kentucky Library & Museum	1981-2008	48 items
Folder 12	University of Kentucky	1984	5 items
Folder 13	Keunincx	1983-1986	22 items
Folder 14	Koslow	1981-2005	41 items
Folder 15	Kunstadter	1980-1996	38 items
Folder 16	General L	1965-2009	18 items
Folder 17	LaBoiteaux	1996-1999	11 items
Folder 18	Lansdell	1980-1984	10 items
Folder 19	LeBihan	1967-1968	11 items
Folder 20	Lester	1984-1995	43 items
Folder 21	Luallen	1983-2003	27 items
BOX 11	Correspondence M-R	1964-2009	512 items
Folder 1	General M	1964-2009	51 items
Folder 2	Mack	1988-1993	13 items
Folder 3	Mateus	1980-1984	20 items
Folder 4	Medalie	1979-1987	15 items
Folder 5	Meredith	1983-1994	10 items
Folder 6	Miller	1969-1996	7 items
Folder 7	Morningstar	1982-1989	4 items

Folder 8	Moss	1980-2002	16 items
Folder 9	McCann	1978-1983	5 items
Folder 10	McGee	1990-1993	24 items
Folder 11	McKinley	1984-1988	4 items
Folder 12	General N	1964-1994	4 items
Folder 13	Normandie Magazine	1994	20 items
Folder 14	Norton	1984-1988	16 items
Folder 15	General O	1985-2006	7 items
Folder 16	General P	1964-2008	35 items
Folder 17	Parsley	1989	16 items
Folder 18	Pearson	1981-1986	7 items
Folder 19	Pickett, Heike Mrs.	1986-1997	43 items
Folder 20	Pickett, Irwin	1982-1994	47 items
Folder 21	Pope	1981-1995	11 items
Folder 22	Porter	1998-2008	10 items
Folder 23	Pritchard	1981-1984	6 items
Folder 24	General R	1983-2008	23 items
Folder 25	Reeves	1980-1984	25 items
Folder 26	Rothschild	1986-1993	15 items
Folder 27	Ross	1982-1984	58 items
BOX 12	Correspondence S-Z	1964-2008	556 items
Folder 1	General S	1964-2007	37 items
Folder 2	Sanders	1984-1997	8 items

Folder 3	Schmidt	1984-1998	64 items
Folder 4	Seghers	1988-1989	17 items
Folder 5	Schroeter	1984-1991	6 items
Folder 6	Silhanek	1982-1988	62 items
Folder 7	Sirak	1987-1991	15 items
Folder 8	Smith	1980-1992	10 items
Folder 9	Speed Museum	1967-1998	44 items
Folder 10	Stapleton	2006-2008	24 items
Folder 11	Strickler's Glass	1988-1990	19 items
Folder 12	Barbara Stewart Interiors	1986-2007	35 items
Folder 13	General T	1968-2005	15 items
Folder 14	Thurman	1988-1990	17 items
Folder 15	Thompson	1964-1982	14 items
Folder 16	Temple	1964	6 items
Folder 17	General U-V	1984-1993	4 items
Folder 18	VanDevender	1986-2005	27 items
Folder 19	General W	1982-2011	27 items
Folder 20	Wallace	1980	10 items
Folder 21	Ward	1982-1908	11 items
Folder 22	Wardi	1982-2008	14 items
Folder 23	Watercolor prints	1992-2007	14 items
Folder 24	Wells	1982-2008	13 items
Folder 25	Whitaker	1993-1996	5 items

Folder 26	General Z	1969-1987	8 items
BOX 13	Biographical Papers	1925-2009	398 items
Folder 1	Personal records	1925-2004	12 items
Folder 2	Memorials	2008	17 items
Folder 3	WKYU	2008	7 items
Folder 4	Sympathy cards	2008	36 items
Folder 5	Menerbes articles	2008	10 items
Folder 6	Dedication	2008	4 items
Folder 7	Downing Museum	2008-2009	12 items
Folder 8	Kentucky Arts Council/ Governor's Awards in the Arts – Correspondence	1982-2001	30 items
Folder 9	Kentucky Arts Council/ Governor's Awards in the Arts – Miscellaneous papers	1982-2001	17 items
Folder 10	"The Hidden River" by Peter Bryant	1986	5 items
Folder 11	Book	1997	31 items
Folder 12	Donations	2005	2 items
Folder 13	Slides	n.d.	147 items
Folder 14	Images	n.d.	30 items
Folder 15	Kentucky Museum – Photos & film	n.d.	31 items
Folder 16	Note cards	n.d.	8 items
BOX 14	Film	1982-1989	2 items
Folder 1	Owensboro Fine Art Museum – Interview on "Insight" on WVJS	1982	1 item

Folder 2 WKU Television Center, "The Works 1989 1 item
 of Joe Downing"

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS DOWNING, Joseph Dudley, 1925-2010
565 1925-2007

Correspondence, articles, news clippings, photographs, exhibit invitations and catalogs, and miscellaneous materials documenting the artistic works and personal life of native Kentucky artist Joe Downing during his career in the United States and abroad. Includes records of exhibits and patrons of Downing's work.

14 boxes. 215 folders. 4,572 items. Originals, photocopies, photographs, VHS tape, and video tape.
SC2013.127.1

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