

Anthony J. Sisti Papers, circa 1925-1982 [bulk 1933-1970], undated

Administrative Information

Creator

Sisti, Anthony J.

Compiler/Donor

Martin, David F.

Call Number

RBR WNYO 1925 .A58

Extent

Four manuscript boxes, 1 photo box (2.17 linear feet)

Abstract

Clippings, correspondence, gallery catalogs and photographs of Anthony J. "Tony" Sisti (1901-1983), artist and professional boxer from Buffalo, NY.

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Acquisition

The *Anthony J. Sisti Papers* were donated to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library in October of 2012 by art curator and writer David F. Martin of Seattle (originally from Niagara Falls, NY).

Biographical Note

Tony Sisti was a boxer turned painter, portraitist, and muralist. Born in 1901 in Greenwich Village, NY, Sisti moved to Buffalo in 1911, where he lived most of his life. Artistically inclined at young age, he attended classes at the Albright Art School. At 17, Sisti began boxing, and by 18, he won the New York State amateur bantamweight title. During his professional boxing career, Sisti won 76 victories in 101 fights.

At 23, Sisti married Carmella Leone and had a daughter soon after. In 1925, he traveled to Florence, Italy and studied painting under Felice Carena; he received his Doctor of Arts degree in 1929. In Italy, Sisti continued his boxing career, participating in bouts and training young

boxers. He also attended art classes in Paris and Munich, studied anatomy at St. Mary's Hospital in Florence under anatomist Chirugi, and painted a portrait of Guglielmo Marconi.

Sisti returned to Buffalo and taught drawing and anatomy at the Art Institute of Buffalo from 1932 to 1938. He also established his own studio at Main and Summer St., later located at Main and Utica. In 1934, he was one of the first artists to paint a mural under the Works Project Administration: a 10-scene commission for the Buffalo City Hospital children's auditorium entitled *Circus*. In 1936, he received the James Carey Evans Memorial prize in the 3rd Annual WNY Exhibition at the Albright Art Gallery for his oil painting *New England Port*. Sisti held a teaching engagement at The New York School of Applied Design for Women from 1939 to 1940. He also taught at the Albright, and in schools in Ontario, Canada, all while maintaining his own school in Buffalo.

During World War II, Sisti worked for Bell Aircraft, drawing and painting visual training aids detailing construction and installation. Over 100 of his drawings were on display during Bell Aircraft's 30th Anniversary in the mid-1960's, and in a one-man show in Florida in 1966.

In 1955, Sisti opened his own art gallery and studio space at 469 Franklin Street. That same year, he helped organize the first Allentown Arts Festival in Buffalo. The Sisti Gallery hosted diverse artists from around the world. He was an extensive collector of other artists' works, notably Charles Burchfield, and in 1979 donated many items from his personal collection to the Burchfield Art Center.

In 1981, Buffalo honored Sisti by naming a public park for him Franklin and North streets. Tony Sisti died on December 15, 1983, survived by his wife, who died soon after.

Sources:

Buff Coll N6537.S558 W67 1979 Facsim
Joffe, Sue. *Sisti*. Burchfield Center, Anthony Sisti Art Show Program.

Martin, David. "Buffalo's Two-Canvas Knockout." *Western New York Heritage*, Fall 2009: 44-54.

Scope and Content

The collection is divided into three series: Personal, Photographs, and Professional work. The majority of the material focuses on Sisti's artistic career and the shows held at his Sisti Gallery. The collection is predominately photographs.

Series I contains a small collection of personal records including correspondence, Sisti's travels to Italy, and his involvement in community organizations.

Series II consists of photographs and negatives documenting Sisti's personal relationships and interests, artwork, and travels. Numerous photos of the Sisti Gallery show building renovation and art shows. Photos are loose, with the exception of six small snap shot albums. *Note:* Photographs originally found with other material can be found in Series I and III.

Series III is comprised of Sisti's professional work and is divided into 4 subseries: Art, Sisti Gallery, Teaching, and Boxing.

Arrangement

- Series I. Personal, circa 1925-1972, undated
- Series II. Photographs, circa 1940s-1960s, undated
- Series III. Professional, circa 1933-1982, undated
 - Subseries A. Art
 - Subseries B. Sisti Gallery
 - Subseries C. Teaching
 - Subseries D. Boxing

Container List

Series I. Personal, ca. 1925-1972, undated

Scope and content: Contains personal correspondence, Sisti's travels to Italy, and community participation. Includes black & white photographs.

Arrangement: Alphabetical by subject

- 1.1 Resume, undated; brief biographies, undated.
- 1.2 Correspondence, 1938-1972.
- 1.3 Italy, ca. 1925; includes 11 undated photographs, 1 postcard, 1 undated clipping.
- 1.4 Italy, ca. 1950; 22 photographs.
- 1.5 Italy, travel tour itinerary, "The Artist Way, 1959.
- 1.6 Italian Sons and Daughters of America, clipping 1937, Dinner Dance handbook, 1964
- 1.7 Maple Queen clipping, 1937.
- 1.8 Patteran Society, 2 photographs, undated.

Series II. Photographs, ca. 1940s-1960s, undated

Scope and content: Over 800 photographs of Sisti, usually with other people, his artwork, and the Sisti Gallery. Most are unidentified and undated except where noted. The majority are black & white, about half are negatives. Box 1 and 2 include photos approximately 5 x 5 to 8 x 10. Box 5 is smaller photos; most are approximately 3.5 x 3.5. Note: Photos are also in Series I and Series III, as originally found with related material.

Arrangement: Divided into two subseries: personal and professional.

Subseries A. Personal

Scope and content: Photographs of Sisti, with other people, personal events, Buffalo locations, and places he traveled.

Arrangement: Alphabetical by subject, chronological within.

- 1.9-1.11 Sisti, often with other people [40]
- 5.1 Sisti, family photos?, with others [10]
- 2.17 Sisti with Robert F. Kennedy, others [13]

- 5.2-5.3 Buffalo buildings [13], Buffalo News Building [21 neg]
- 5.4-5.5 Buffalo grain elevators [22 + 1 small albums]
- 5.6 Buffalo Skyway construction, waterfront, other buildings [1 small album]
- 5.7 Buildings, unidentified [19]
- 5.8 Car dealership [2]
- 5.9 Fort Lauderdale, FL [2 + 9 neg]
- 5.10 Funeral, unidentified [4 + 20 neg]
- 5.11 George working on fireplace [23 neg]
- 5.12 Georgia [24 neg]
- 5.13 Italian Destroyer, ship, Buffalo 1976 [20]
- 5.14 Rome, Marconi residence [16 neg]
- 5.15-16 Shipyard event [8 + 8 neg]
- 5.17-19 Travel, unidentified [3 albums]
- 5.20 Venice, Tony Carena [3 neg]
- 5.21 Zigry, Marlene (?) [11 neg]
- 1.18, 2.18
- 5.22-30 Unidentified people, places, 1967, undated [46+ 58 neg]

Subseries B. Professional

Scope and content: Photographs Sisti's artwork and work in the art community, the Sisti Gallery, and teaching.

Arrangement: Alphabetical by subject, chronological within.

- 1.12 Artwork by Sisti; boxers [2]
- 1.13-1.14
- 5.47-48 Artwork by Sisti; portraits [27 +5 neg]
- 5.46 Artwork by Sisti; portrait: Pankow, Steven. Buffalo mayor, 1959 [3 neg]
- 1.15 Artwork by Sisti, other subjects and Sisti seated at easel [9]
- 5.31 Artwork by Sisti on television [1 small album]
- Artwork, possibly shown at Sisti Gallery, named or signed [17]
- 1.26,
- 2.20-24 Artwork and people, unidentified [105 + 19 slides] See also Series III
- 5.32 Albright-Knox Art Gallery [4]
- 5.33 Allentown Art Festival [6]
- 1.25, 2.25
- 5.34 Bell Aircraft [2 + 1 neg]
- 5.35-43 Florida show, 1966? [10 + 69 neg]
- 5.44-45 Life drawing, female model nude [15 + 15 neg]
- 5.49 Sisti Gallery, renovation/construction [9]
- 5.50 Sisti Gallery, interior [8]
- 5.51-58 Sisti Gallery, exterior, including courtyard, garden work [28 + 19 neg]

- 5.59-62 Sisti Gallery, marble piece [12 + 17 neg]
 5.63-69 Sisti Gallery, sculpture [32 + 28 neg]
 5.70 Sisti Gallery shows: 2nd Annual Spring [13 neg]
 5.71 Sisti Gallery shows, Landscape artist [10 neg]
 5.72 Sisti Gallery shows, Pucci banner [2 + 1 neg]
 5.73-74 Sisti Gallery shows, Fran Williams, Oct 1966 [19 + 7 neg]
- 2.26-27,
 5.75-79 Sisti Gallery shows, unidentified, [76 + 34 neg]
- 5.80-82 Teaching, art classes. Includes Fort Erie [2 + 11 neg]
 5.83 Other unidentified photos [8]

Series III. Professional, circa 1933-1982, undated

Scope and content: The bulk of the material is clippings and photographs covering Sisti's art career, including his own work and the Sisti Gallery. There is very little material on boxing and his art classes.

Arrangement: Divided into four subseries: Art, Sisti Gallery, Boxing, and Teaching.

Arrangement: Alphabetical by subject, chronological within.

Subseries A: Art

Scope and content: Sisti's art career. Includes clippings, correspondence, 8x10 photographs, Sisti Gallery show catalogues.

Arrangement: Alphabetical by subject, chronological within subjects.

- 3.1 Allentown Art Festival, undated
 3.2 Awards, Tuscan Farm, April 1934
 3.3 Awards, Albright Art Gallery, James Carey Evans Memorial Prize, March 1936
 3.4 Awards, Italian Council Certificate of Merit, March 1960.
- 3.5-3.7 Bell Aircraft clippings, 8 photographs, 1945, 1955-56
 3.8 Burchfield, Charles. 3 photographs and Sisti's memorial for Burchfield
 3.9-3.11 Clippings, 1933-1960, undated.
 3.12 Commissions, portraits of Carnera (1933), and Julius Stone
 3.13 Commissions, *Circus* (1934)
 3.14 Commissions, portraits of Nelson Baker (1934), Christopher Moudy, and Mrs. Peter A. Porter (1946)
 3.15 Commissions, Lew Herschel (1960)
 3.16 Commissions, Elmer F. Lux (1960)
 3.17 Commissions, Furnco Corporation mural, drawn by Sisti, executed by Fran Williams (1968), 2 photographs
 3.18 Hanley Collection, Tullah Hanley, clippings and 5 photographs, 1969-1976
- 3.19 Shows, New York, Feb 1939
 3.20 Shows, Syracuse, May 1941

- 3.21 Shows, Buffalo Artists, Albright Art Gallery, July 1951
- 3.22 Shows, Buffalo Community Music School, March 1953
- 3.23 Shows, Women's Medical Auxiliary of Niagara Falls, 1958
- 3.24 Shows, Florida, March 1966
- 3.25 Shows, Burchfield Gallery, 1979

Subseries B: Sisti Gallery

Scope and content: Sisti's Galleries at Main Street and later Franklin Street. Includes clippings, correspondence, 8x10 photographs, show catalogues.

- 3.26 Clippings, April 1946, July 1955
- 3.27 Correspondence, 1956-1974
- 3.28 Shows: Spring Show "Protest", 1956-1957; Arnold Menches, September 1958; Olean Artists. October 1958
- 3.29 Shows: Four Man Show. February 1959; Ronald Satok, March 1959; Alexis J. Fournier, September 1959
- 3.30 Shows: Eight Mexican Artists, March 1960; Roberto Pucci, April 1960; John Vassar-House, May 1960; Six Israeli Artists, October 1960 [7 photos]
- 4.1 Shows: Pietro Annigoni, 1964 & 1975 [1 photo, 1 neg]
- 4.2 Shows: John DeTorre, March 1965 [2 photos]
- 4.3 Shows: Jeffrey B. Low, August 1965 [1 photo]
- 4.4 Shows: Fran Williams, October 1966
- 4.5 Shows: Five Nations, Ten Artists. September 1969 [1 photo]
- 4.6 Shows: William Garms, October 1970 [1 photo]
- 4.7-4.10 Shows: Macri, Giuseppe, May 1974 [54 photos]
- 4.11 Shows: Hertzberg, Rose. January 1980. (3 Artists Show)
- 4.12 Shows: Shaar, Pinhas, undated
- 4.13-4.14 Shows: Catalogues, 1966-1982
- 4.15-4.17 Sisti Gallery Photographs [28 + 22 color slides]

Subseries C: Boxing

- 4.18 Clipping, 1939; Program, 1975; 1 photo, undated

Subseries D: Teaching

- 4.19 Classes in New York; Ridgeway, Canada; Albright Art Gallery, clippings 1938, 1958 [2 photos]
- 4.20 Portrait Seminars, clippings, 1953, undated.

Related Materials

Buffalo Collection N5020.B9 I6 1ST 1956. Sisti Gallery, Buffalo (N.Y.). *1st spring exhibition: Independent artists of western New York*; presented April 8-May 8, 1956.

Buffalo Collection N5020.B9 S5
Sisti Galleries, Buffalo. *6 artists of Israel*. October 2-16, 1960.