

# American Academy of the Fine Arts records (Columbianum)

AO.001

Finding Aid updated by Hoang Tran

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PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY  
OF THE FINE ARTS

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts  
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Updated December 2015

**Summary Information**

<b>Repository</b>	The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Dorothy & Kenneth Woodcock Archives
<b>Creator</b>	American Academy of the Fine Arts
<b>Title</b>	American Academy of the Fine Arts records(Columbianum)
<b>Call number</b>	AO.001
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1794-1795
<b>Extent</b>	4 folders
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	The Columbianum was a Philadelphia association comprised of thirty professional and amateur artists established in 1794 and ceased operations soon after in 1795. This collection consists of the original manuscript copy of the association's by-laws, constitution, a photocopy of its 1795 exhibition catalogue, an association agreement, and an undated history of the organization.

**Preferred Citation note**

[identification of item], Title of Collection, Collection ID#, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Dorothy & Kenneth Woodcock Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

## **Historical note**

The short-lived Columbianum, an association of thirty professional and amateur artists, factious from the outset, sponsored a single exhibition, which was held in Independence Hall, and hastily planned an academy for art instruction. Much to the disappointment of Charles Willson Peale and other artists, the Columbianum ceased to function in 1795. Rembrandt Peale recorded in his 1855 *Reminiscences*, published in *The Crayon*, that it “died a natural death, by schisms.”

## **Scope and Contents note**

This collection consists of the original manuscript copy of the society’s by-laws, constitution, a photocopy of its 1795 exhibition catalogue, an association agreement, and an undated history of the organization.

Most of this collection has been microfilmed by the Archives of American Art. See the reel numbers listed below.

Apparently, in 1821 Rubens Peale used the later pages of this volume as a letterbook. The two parts have been separated and bound as two items. See the papers of Peale’s Museum below for more information. The manuscript of the constitution is filmed on reel P45:405-19. The 1795 printed version of the constitution is filmed on reel P52:586-95.

## **Arrangement note**

Arranged chronologically.

## **Administrative Information**

### **Conditions Governing Access note**

Collection is open for research.

The archives reserves the right to restrict access to materials of sensitive nature. Please contact the department for further information.

### **Conditions Governing Use note**

The collection is the physical property of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Archives. The Museum holds literary rights only for material created by Museum personnel or given to the Museum with such rights specifically assigned. For all other material, literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs

and assigns. Researchers are responsible for obtaining permission from rights holders for publication and for other purposes where stated.

**Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

**Provenance note**

Collection was donated to the archives by David Brigham, 1988.

**Processing Information note**

Processed by Cheryl Leibold.

**Controlled Access Headings**

**Person(s)**

**Corporate Name(s)**

**Genre(s)**

**Geographic Name(s)**

**Subject(s)**

**Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note**

**Collection Inventory**

Folder Title	Date	Box	Folder
By-laws	1794	1	1
Constitution	1794	1	2
Association Agreement, 1794 (containing two copies of the agreement). Filmed on reel P63:131-32.	December 29, 1794	1	3
Exhibition catalogue, 1795 (a photocopy of the printed catalogue in the collection of the American Philosophical Society). Filmed on reel P37:496-99.  History (a typescript, with 1944 note re lack of knowledge about who typed or compiled the history), 8 pp., n.d. Unfilmed.	1795	1	4