

Violet Oakley papers

MS.020

Finding Aid prepared by Hoang Tran



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY
OF THE FINE ARTS

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
118-128 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

archives@pafa.org

215-972-2066

Updated by Hoang Tran, January 2016

Summary Information

Repository	The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock Archives
Creator	Violet Oakley (1874-1961)
Title	Violet Oakley papers
Date [bulk]	
Date [inclusive]	1920s-1950s
Extent	1 document box
Location note	
Language	
Language of Materials note	English
Abstract	The collection consists of about 45 examples of printed descriptions and flyers for mural cycles and illustrated books, created by Oakley from about 1920 to about 1950. A small group of artist supply catalogues and instruction manuals, dating from the early to mid-twentieth century, is also a part of this collection. (There are several photographs of Oakley in the Jane Allen Boyer scrapbooks, <i>q.v.</i>)

Preferred Citation note

[identification of item], Title of Collection, Collection ID#, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

Historical note

Violet Oakley -- illustrator, muralist, writer, and pacifist -- played a prominent role in the artistic life of Philadelphia for almost half a century. She was affiliated with the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in many ways: as a student (1895-96); as a faculty member (1912-17); as an exhibitor (1896-1959); as well as a founding member of the alumni Fellowship. Exhibitions of her work have appeared at the Academy in 1900, 1901, 1919, 1947, 1950, and 1997. Oakley's illustrations for books, magazines and poems, strongly influenced by Howard Pyle, appeared in many popular publications.

Oakley was also well known as a mural painter. She executed three large mural cycles for the Pennsylvania Capitol in Harrisburg between 1902 and 1922, as well as commissions for several churches and schools in the Philadelphia area.

Oakley was a co-founder of several Philadelphia cultural organizations. She was also internationally known as a pacifist, a proponent of disarmament, and a supporter of the League of Nations. Remaining active until her death, she started the "Great Women of the Bible" mural for the First Presbyterian Church of Germantown when she was over seventy years old.

Scope and Contents note

The collection consists of about 45 examples of printed descriptions and flyers for mural cycles and illustrated books, created by Oakley from about 1920 to about 1950. A small group of artist supply catalogues and instruction manuals, dating from the early to mid-twentieth century, is also a part of this collection. (There are several photographs of Oakley in the Jane Allen Boyer scrapbooks, *q.v.*)

There is also a copy of the printed book "Report of the Sesqui-Centennial Committee of The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," 1927.

Clipping on Oakley from 1914 Public Ledger.

Arrangement note

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

The collection came to the Academy from the Violet Oakley Memorial Foundation in 1987. The Foundation was formed after the death of Violet Oakley to disseminate her works and estate. The Foundation was run by Edith Emerson, Oakley's companion, and a board of trustees. A large collection of manuscripts and other memorabilia was given to the Archives of American Art by the Foundation shortly after Oakley's death. After Emerson's death, the remaining art materials at *Cogslea*, the Oakley-Emerson home, were given to the Academy.

The 1987 gift contained significant quantities of material that seemed to be part of the collection given to the Archives of American Art in the 1960s. Accordingly, the photographs, manuscripts, annotated books, and dummy copies were transferred there. One copy of each piece of printed matter was retained for the Academy's archives. In addition, the Academy retained numerous works of art including drawings, pastels and some oil studies, several copies of Oakley's illustrated books (*The Law Triumphant* and *The Holy Experiment*), and many sets of unbound plates from each.

Processing Information note

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
Finding Aid		1	1
Book: Samuel F.B. Morse	1939	1	2
Report of the Pennsylvania Sesqui-centennial	January 1927	1	3
Sample of plates from "The Law Triumphant"		1	4
Printed matter: re her books and murals		1	5
Artist supply catalogs		1	6
Photographs (2) of G. Washington and Meade murals		1	7
Book: The Holy Experiment: Our Heritage from William Penn 1644-1944 (limited edition but no #)	1950	2	
Law Triumphant (Plates)	1932	2	
Law Triumphant (Text) (limited edition but no #)	1932	2	
The Miracle of Geneva	1932	2	
Illustrated Philadelphia Public Ledger clippings of Violet Oakley Studio (10 1/4H x 14 1/4W") 2 copies	December 13, 1914	Flat file 19	1