Dan Arje papers, 1949-1981
KA.0001

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit
February 28, 2017
Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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Collection Overview

Repository Kellen Design Archives

Creator Arje, Dan, -1993

Creator - Photographer Malan, Nick

Creator - Photographer Roehl, Virginia

Title Dan Arje papers

Date [inclusive] 1949-1981
Extent

3.4 linear ft: 1 box, 5 folders, 5 binders

Summary

Dan Arje (1923-1993) was a designer and display director for Bonwit Teller. The collection is primarily comprised of albums containing photographs and news clippings about Arje's displays, as well as correspondence regarding his decorating work for the White House during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, including the decoration of the White House Christmas tree. Also present are materials Arje collected about Bonwit Teller and Tiffany's designer Gene Moore.

Preferred Citation note

[Identification of item], [date (if known), Dan Arje papers, KA.0001, box __, folder __, New School Archives and Special Collections, The New School, New York, New York.

Biographical Note

After serving in the South Pacific during World War II, Daniel Arje (pronounced AR-jay) graduated from Cooper Union in 1948 and began work at Bonwit Teller on New York's Fifth Avenue that same year. As a member of Bonwit's display team, Arje was promoted to assistant display director in 1954 and succeeded Gene Moore as display director in 1961. His window displays often showcased the work of lesser known artists, including Andy Warhol in the 1950s and Jim Rosenquist in the early 1960s. Throughout the Johnson administration, Arje was invited to the White House to design the Blue Room's annual Christmas tree and other White House events. After leaving Bonwit Teller in 1973, Arje worked for Wamsutta Pacific, Frances Denney, and Dan River; he later consulted for Time Warner, Tishman-Speyer and the French Tourist Board. Dan Arje died in his native New York in March 1993. He was 69 years old.


Scope and Content of Collection

The Dan Arje papers include clippings, correspondence, numerous photographs, publications, and a scrapbook. All materials are of a professional nature, and primarily document his work as a display designer and display director at the Bonwit Teller department store. In addition to materials documenting
Arje's role at Bonwit Teller, clippings and photographs also document the work of Gene Moore. The papers are divided into three series by format.

General includes clippings about Dan Arje and Bonwit Teller, especially Arje's predecessor as display director, Gene Moore; correspondence, including materials from the Kennedy and Johnson White Houses; and a scrapbook comprised of clippings, correspondence, and numerous photographs.

Photographs includes materials originally housed in albums--without accompanying materials such as clippings or correspondence--and file folders. The majority of the photographs are black and white prints depicting Bonwit Teller display windows featuring women's apparel and accessories. One folder of color photographs, which postdate Arje's employment with Bonwit Teller, depicts an unidentified department store's displays for Adolfo perfumes. An unidentified fashion show, possibly dating to the late 1970s, is also documented in color snapshots. Dated prints span 1949 through 1981. Also included are glossy publicity materials with attached color stereo slides produced by Merchandise Display News. Bonwit Teller employed artists such as Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, and Robert Rauschenberg; their work--along with the work of unidentified artists--is depicted in these photographs. Of note are a series of photographs of Bonwit Teller perfume displays featuring actor and photographer Cris Alexander dressed in drag. According to William McCarthy, a manager in advertising and display from the early 1950s to 1975, the Bonwit Teller management was never informed that the perfume model was not a woman.

Publications feature the display design work of Dan Arje and Gene Moore.

Organization and Arrangement

Organized in 3 series:

I  General, 1962-1973, undated
II  Photographs, 1949-1981
III  Published materials, 1955-1972

Administrative Information

Publication Information
Kellen Design Archives September 14, 2010

Revision Description
Additional description added. December 11, 2015

Conditions Governing Access note
Collection is open for research use. Please contact archivist@newschool.edu for appointment.
Use Restrictions
To publish images of material from this collection, permission must be obtained in writing from the New School Archives. Please contact: archivist@newschool.edu.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note
Transferred from Fashion Design Department, Parsons School of Design, 1997.

Related Materials
The New School Archives holds a collection of fashion designer portraits by Parsons School of Design instructor Dora Mathieu (KA.0032). A letter from Mathieu to Arje is present in the Dan Arje papers.

Keywords for Searching Related Subjects

Corporate Name(s)
- Bonwit Teller & Co.
- Retail Reporting Bureau (New York, N.Y.).

Genre(s)
- Correspondence.
- Photographs.
- Scrapbooks.

Occupation(s)
- Display designers.

Personal Name(s)
- Johns, Jasper, 1930-
- Moore, Gene, 1910-1998
- Rauschenberg, Robert, 1925-2008
- Warhol, Andy, 1928-1987

Subject(s)
- Commercial art -- United States -- 20th century.
- Department stores -- United States -- 20th century.
- Display of merchandise.
- Fashion merchandising.
- Show windows.
- Women's clothing -- United States -- 20th century -- Pictorial works.

**Other Finding Aids note**

For selected item-level description and images from the Dan Arje papers, see The New School Archives Digital Collections at [http://digitalarchives.library.newschool.edu/index.php/Detail/collections/KA0001](http://digitalarchives.library.newschool.edu/index.php/Detail/collections/KA0001).

**Collection Inventory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Series I. General 1962-1973, undated</th>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence, 1965-1973, undated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correspondence from White House, 1962-1969</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program and invitation to dedication of Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, 1971</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scrapbook, 1961-1969</td>
<td>k_14</td>
<td>8-12</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Series II. Photographs 1949-1981</th>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Albums 1950-1981</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Album 1, 1950-1956</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Binder 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Album 2, 1955-1957</td>
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<td>Binder 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Album 3, 1950-1958</td>
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<td>Binder 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Album 4, 1954-1955</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Album 5, 1954-1957</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loose prints and negatives 1949-1981</th>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General, 1949-1970s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discrete sets of prints include Christmas and Mother's Day displays; a &quot;Call of the Outdoors&quot; display featuring mannequins wearing masks of feathers designed by &quot;William J.&quot; (Bill Cunningham); a display labeled &quot;Benda Masque,&quot; featuring masks presumably designed by Wadysaw Teodor &quot;W.T.&quot; Benda; and a fashion forecast display credited to Fashion Director Danny Zarem.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolfo, 1981</td>
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<td>Title</td>
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<td>Folder</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe [negatives], 1960</td>
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<td>Merchandise Display News, 1952-1957</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td><strong>Series III. Published materials 1955-1972</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Clippings, 1955-1972</strong></td>
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<td><em>Display: International Display and Exhibition Review</em>, 1956 Feb</td>
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<td>Bonwit Teller featured on page 31.</td>
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<td><em>Graphis</em> reprint of Gene Moore article, after 1955</td>
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<td><em>Inspiration</em> volumes 10-11, 1966</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td><em>McCall's Sportswear &amp; Dress Merchandiser</em>, 1967 Nov-Dec</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
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