Tom Brigance fashion publicity and sketches, 1932-1977
KA.0005

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February 28, 2017
Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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Collection Overview

Repository Kellen Design Archives

Creator Brigance, Tom, 1913-1990

Title Tom Brigance fashion publicity and sketches

Date [inclusive] 1932-1977

Extent 6.7 linear ft: 5 boxes, 1 oversize box, 6 oversize folders

Abstract After graduating from the New York School of Fine and Applied Art (later, Parsons School of Design) in 1934, Tom Brigance (1913-1990) became a fashion designer specializing in women's swimwear and sportswear. Exclusive designer at Frank Gallant in the 1950s, Brigance
won the fashion industry's Coty Award in 1953. The collection includes scrapbooks of clippings and photographs publicizing Brigance's designs, sketches, publicity materials, and four original fashion illustrations of Brigance swimwear by Dorothy Hood, produced for Lord & Taylor.

Preferred Citation note

[Identification of item], [date (if known)], Tom Brigance fashion publicity and sketches, KA.0005, box __, folder __, New School Archives and Special Collections, The New School, New York, New York.

Biographical note

American fashion designer Thomas Franklin Brigance was born in Waco, Texas on February 4, 1918. Brigance came to New York in 1931 to attend the New York School of Fine and Applied Art (now, Parsons The New School for Design) and the National Academy of Art. After graduating from Parsons in 1934, Brigance moved to Paris where he studied at the Sorbonne and the Académie de la Grande Chaumières, and later freelanced as a fashion designer for Jaeger and Simpson's of Piccadilly in London. Brigance returned to New York and, after catching the attention of Dorothy Shaver of Lord & Taylor, began designing exclusive sportswear and beachwear for the department store. The Brigance name quickly became synonymous with swimwear and beachclothes, and Lord & Taylor boasted of the association in a 1939 advertisement appearing in *Vogue*, urging those in New York for the World's Fair to visit the Beach Shop. "home of creations by Brigance, one of our own designers, whose ideas enchant even the blasé Riviera."

Brigance left Lord & Taylor to join the military in 1941, and was decorated for bravery and leadership while serving in the Air Force Intelligence Service in the South Pacific from 1941 through 1944. Returning to Lord & Taylor after World War II, Brigance stayed until 1949, when he left to open his own firm. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he freelanced for Sportsmarket, Sinclair, and Gabar (now licensed by Swimwear Anywhere, Inc.).

Brigance went on to design a wide range of women's clothing, and even designed Chrysler automobile interiors in 1955 (with Parsons alumna Claire McCardell), but his notoriety came from his sportswear designs, which garnered him the Coty American Fashion Critic's Award in 1953, the International Silk Citation in 1954, the National Cotton Award in 1955, and the Internazionale delle Ari Award in 1956. After retiring in the late 1970s, Brigance continued to lecture at design and fashion institutes up to his death in 1990.
Scope and Contents of Collection

Although Brigance began his career designing a variety of women's apparel, by the 1960s he was primarily specializing in swimwear and sportswear, a focus reflected by the contents of this collection. Materials include fashion illustrations and sketches, scrapbooks, and publicity materials, such as press releases and fashion photographs, documenting the marketing of Brigance's designs. The collection also includes fashion illustrations by Dorothy Hood depicting Brigance swimwear sold through Lord & Taylor during the 1960s.

The bulk of the collection consists of thematic scrapbooks featuring magazine and newspaper clippings, captioned fashion photographs, press releases, and other printed publicity materials. The earliest scrapbook, which begins in 1932, covers Brigance's work with Bonwit Teller, Marjorie Dunton, Jaeger's, Simpson's (London) and Lord & Taylor, and features black and white photographs of Brigance at work early in his career. While photographs and printed materials, such as programs and invitations, have been isolated from newsprint for preservation purposes, the scrapbooks otherwise remain as titled and organized by their creator.

Organization and Arrangement

Organized in 2 series. Scrapbooks are arranged alphabetically by title.

I General, circa 1950s-1960s
II Scrapbooks, 1932-1977

Administrative Information

Publication Information
Kellen Design Archives November 9, 2010

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
Transferred to the archives circa 2000.
Related Materials

A copy of *American Fashion: The Life and Lines of Adrian, Mainbocher, McCardell, Norell, Trigere* (New York: Quadrangle, 1975) inscribed to Brigance from Jean Colbert will be found in the New School Archives and Special Collections.

Keywords for Searching Related Subjects

Corporate Name(s)
- Coty American Fashion Critics’ Awards.
- Lord & Taylor.
- National Cotton Council of America.

Genre(s)
- Clippings (information artifacts).
- Fashion illustrations (layout features).
- Fashion photographs.
- Scrapbooks.
- Sketches.

Occupation(s)
- Fashion designers.

Subject(s)
- Bathing suits -- United States -- 20th century -- Pictorial works.
- Children's clothing -- United States -- 20th century -- Pictorial works.
- Fashion design.
- Fashion illustration.
- Fashion merchandising.
- Fashion shows.
- Women's clothing -- United States -- 20th century -- Pictorial works.

Other Finding Aids note
For selected item-level description and images from the Tom Brigance publicity and sketches, see the New School Archives Digital Collections at [http://digitalarchives.library.newschool.edu/index.php/Detail/collections/KA0005](http://digitalarchives.library.newschool.edu/index.php/Detail/collections/KA0005).

### Collection Inventory

#### Series I. General circa 1950s-1960s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations for swimwear [Dorothy Hood for Lord &amp; Taylor], 1960s</td>
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<td></td>
<td>OSx-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photographs, circa 1965</td>
<td>OSx-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster, undated</td>
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<td>Sketches: Coats, undated</td>
<td>OSx-1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sketches: Sportswear, undated</td>
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<td>5-6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k_OSxxx-3</td>
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#### Series II. Scrapbooks 1932-1973

Link to selected images from this series., 1932-1973


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<tr>
<td>[Untitled], 1932-1940</td>
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<td>1-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awards, Honors, Acclaim, Lectures &amp; Fabrics, 1953-1971</td>
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<td>1-3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1-3</td>
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<td>Brigance for Gabar, 1976-1977</td>
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<td>4-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children &amp; Teens, Sleepwear, Table Settings, Men's Neckwear, 1956-1961</td>
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<td>4-6</td>
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<td>Cruise/Resort, Swim &amp; Playwear, 1962-1969</td>
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<td>7-8</td>
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<td>Swimwear and Sportswear, 1953-1973</td>
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<td>Waterclothes 1-3, 1969-1972</td>
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