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Finding aid for the Orville Bulman art references collection Collection 357

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Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections
Department

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Title:	Orville Bulman art references collection
ID:	Collection 357
Date [inclusive]:	1924, circa 1952-2006
Physical Description:	1.6 Linear Feet Three boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Orville Bulman (1904-1978) was an artist and businessman from Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was active in the family business, the E.O. Bulman Manufacturing Co., for much of his adult life but had desired to be an artist from his youth. Largely self-taught, he began focusing more on his art work in the late 1930s and was noticed nationally in the 1950s. He did much of his artwork from his second home in Palm Beach, Florida and tropical settings with vibrant colors are often themes of his whimsical works. This collection is currently composed of photocopied and original exhibit catalogs and research materials, including biographical information, news clippings and a few photographs. One original piece, "Grand Rapids, a Good Place to Live" is also included in the collection, and is currently hanging in the Vander Veen Center for the Book.

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Biographical / Historical

Orville C. Bulman, 1904-1978, was the son of E.O. (Elvah Orville) Bulman and Margaret Agnes Young Bulman of Grand Rapids, Michigan. E.O. Bulman invented a twine holder and dispenser which started the family business, the E.O. Bulman Manufacturing Co., and built the family fortune. Orville's native skills as an artist developed early. Those looking for his work might seek examples in school publications such as the Helios (1924), for those years when Orville attended Grand Rapids Central High School. He worked for one year after graduation as a cartoonist for a Chicago newspaper. But, the pressure to join the family business was too great, and Orville postponed his active work as an artist until the late 1930s, at which time he began to more actively exhibit his work in shows throughout the country. Largely self-taught, he supplemented his art education by taking short courses at such places as the Chicago Art

Institute summer art school at Ox-Bow in Saugatuck, or the Norton Art Gallery in West Palm Beach studying with Eric Lundgren.

Bulman married Jean Cleland, also a Grand Rapids resident, in the early 1930s. The couple had no children. They established winter residence in Palm Beach, Florida beginning around 1946, though maintaining their Plymouth Ave. House until around 1974. Bulman continued to be an active leader of the Grand Rapids business, becoming President in 1954. It appears the move to Palm Beach gave Bulman more freedom to concentrate on his paintings. Many of his paintings use Southern and tropical settings, and exotic lands such as Haiti as a backdrop. His work is colorful, and has been described as "whimsical fantasy." In the 1950s he received notice in Newsweek Magazine and Life Magazine. Among the collectors of Bulman's work in the 1950s and 1960s were the Duchess of Windsor, Henry Fonda, Greer Garson, Joan Fontaine and Robert F. Kennedy.

Bulman remained President of the Bulman Co. until 1975, even after it was sold to Rospatch Corporation around 1971. By the time he retired, he already had some 40 one-man exhibits and 2,000 paintings sold. Orville Bulman passed away in January 1978; Jean Bulman lived on until September 1993.

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Scope and Contents

Most of the materials in this collection are photocopies of photocopies, thus the quality of the images and the information may be poor in some cases. Some original exhibit catalogs have also recently been acquired.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department

111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

localhis@grpl.org

URL: <http://www.grpl.org>

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Eugene Kozak, Edward and Deborah Pollack, staff. Accession numbers 2004.060, 2004.086, 2006.010, 2006.006F and 2007.045.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

Robinson Studio Collection. Includes negatives for the E.O. Bulman 60th Anniversary Party. Neg. C004802.

Also in the Robinson Collection are Negs. H002142 and H015727, which depict members of the Bulman family.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Artists -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Art -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- Bulman, Orville

Collection Inventory

Series I. Biographical & Historical Information.

Biographical

Title/Description	Instances
Citizens Historical Association biography for Elvah O. Bulman, (Father of Orville Bulman).	Box 1 Folder 1

Orville Bulman: a brief biography [2005] Excerpt from Inspired Whimsy?	Box 1	Folder 1
Orville & Jean Bulman page from "A Legacy of Caring" 75th Anniversary publication of the Grand Rapids Foundation. ca. 1997.	Box 1	Folder 1
Orville Bulman obit. "Retired Executive Artist". Grand Rapids Press, Jan. 5, 1978.	Box 1	Folder 1
Jean Bulman obit., Sept. 15, 1993.	Box 1	Folder 1
Ex-Salesman buys first that dispenses success. Grand Rapids Press, Feb. 18, 1997.	Box 1	Folder 1

General

See also the biographies in the exhibit catalogs below.

"Orville Bulman Rumor Control Center" / Deborah Pollack. 4 web pages + an email from Pollack to Diana Barrett RE the Grand Rapids Historical Commission Website. May 16, 2008. http://www.orvillebulman.com/rumors.html 00.[5532].1	Box 1	Folder 1
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Photographs

Title/Description	Instances	
Mrs. Orville Bulman, Chairman of Candidates Questionnaires, and others. League of Women Voters, Publicity for Candidates Rally, Sept. 10, 1948. Copy photo from a photo in Coll. 104-2c-49.8 00.[5102].1	Box 1	Folder 1.5
Painting for a Gallery Show, or Artists: Art Galleries Want You! / a copy of the original manuscript by Orville Bulman, n.d. 74 pgs. + unnumbered illustrations throughout.	Box 1	

Correspondence

Title/Description	Instances	
Orville's Letters from Haiti mailed to Jean [wife]. 58 pgs. Typed. [1952] No headings or signatures, i.e. Perhaps a transcription. Photocopy. 2004.060	Box 1.5	Folder 1

Bulman Website materials

Title/Description	Instances	
"Sneak Preview" of book: "Orville Bulman : an enchanted life and fantastic legacy. Palm Beach, Fl. : Blue Heron Press, Website print. 2006.010B http://www.orvillebulman.com/	Box 1.5	Folder 2

Book Publication

Title/Description	Instances	
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Orville Bulman : an enchanted life and fantastic legacy / by Deborah C. Pollack. Blue Heron Press, 2005,2006 2006.006F	Box 2	
Book jacket for book above. 2006.010C	Box 1.5	Folder 3

Ephemera related to Bulman book publication.

Title/Description	Instances	
Invitation to presentation by Deborah C. Pollack, Sept. 29, 2006 on Bulman Book. Grand Rapids Art Museum. From David and Judy Frey.	Box 1	Folder 4
Illustrated card announcing the publication of the book.	Box 1	Folder 4
Press Release, RE the books publication. 2006.010C	Box 1	Folder 4

Bulman Samples

Title/Description	Instances	
[Book Prospectus] Photocopies of a photocopy; 12 "Chapters"=13 sheets. 2004.060	Box 1	Folder 3
Helios Annual, v. 50, June 1924. Various pages with Bulman or his illustrations for this Central High School (Grand Rapids, Michigan) school yearbook.	Box 1	Folder 7
Orville Bulman : a colorful character. Excerpts palmbeachpost.com. color printer sheets	Box 1	Folder 8

General

See also the Palm Beach Post Jan. 30, 2005 articles in Box 2.

Graphic Clippings : Bulman illustrations probably clipped from exhibit catalogs or flyers.

Title/Description	Instances	
La Protectrice	Box 1	Folder 2
New Arrival	Box 1	Folder 2
Book entitled "Paris I Love" with signature of Orville Bulman 2010.028	Box 1	

Three color published reproductions of Bulman Work. Source unknown. (2004.060)

Title/Description	Instances	
1. Joyeux Noel II. Shows Caribbean Island figures standing in a boat "Timonier" with a Christmas tree, and angels in the air.	Box 2	

2. Beaux Arts Jeux Les Bals; C'est ICI, Le Grand Commencement. La Bonne Vie. ... Shows a boat "Le Grand Mode", with islander figures and animals.	Box 2
3. Shows Animals in a jungle setting with native figures, and a nun in the air in a hot air balloon.	Box 2

Periodical articles & Newspaper Clippings. By date, latest first.

Title/Description	Instances
Haute Type: Gift Books. Dec. 3, 2006. Palmbeachdailynews.com 2007.014. 3 sheets	Box 1 Folder 6.5
Leisure. Mixed Media / by Melissa Cantor. Palm Beach Illustrated. Dec. 2006. Color computer print 2007.014	Box 1 Folder 6.5
"A Legacy in Question : a new book celebrates the late Orville Bulman of Grand Rapids, whose Caribbean paintings have been criticized as stereotyping" / Curt Wozniak. Home & Design: Legacy. Grand Rapids Magazine, Nov. 2006.	Box 1 Folder 5
"Book Showcases Bulman's 'happy' art : Grand Rapids native known for paintings of South Sea Islands." GR Press, Oct. 8, 2006.	Box 1.5 Folder 4
Gary Schwan's Art Lesson : our critic's look at local treasures. Oct. 1, 2006. Palm Beach Post. Photocopy. 2006.014	Box 1 Folder 6.5
[Bulman biography exerpt] Magazine Antiques, May 2005.	Box 1 Folder 6
"A Colorful Character : a Palm Beach gallery revives memories of painter Orville Bulman and the days when artists were part of the island's swells-and-society scene." Palm Beach Post. Arts & Entertainment. Jan. 30, 2005. Color laser photocopy, 2 sheets. http://www.palmbeachpost.com . c. 1 2006.010.C / c. 2 2007.014.	Box 2
Orville Bulman : he likes the world he paints / by Christopher Salisbury. Palm Beach Life. Feb. 1976. Photocopy. 2004.060	Box 1.5 Folder 5
Oversized b/w photocopy version of article & illustrations.	Box 2
Color laser photocopy of the Bulman illustration on the cover of Palm Beach Life, Feb. 1976.	Box 2
Dateline: Palm Beach. RE: Bulman exhibit. Palm Beach Life. Dec. 1963. pg. 4	Box Unknown Folder Unknown
Oversized b/w photocopy of cover.	Box 2
Color laser photocopy of the Bulman illustration on the cover of Palm Beach Life, Dec. 1963.	Box 2

General

This illustration is the same as #1 of the 3 color published reproductions listed above.

Artist Bulman Busy with 1-man Shows. Grand Rapids Press, Oct. 12, 1965.	Box 1	Folder 6
Two Bulman Shows On GR Industrialist Painter has Exhibits Going in Florida, Bahamas. Grand Rapids Press, Mar. 10, 1963.	Box 1	Folder 6
"The Bums Ball". Illustrated invitation to event hosted by Jean or Orvy Bulman and Helen and Russ Kelley. Photocopy. Syracuse, N.Y. Post Standard. March 8, 1962. pg. 15.	Box 1	Folder 6
Two Career Man Busy / Marguerite S. Kerns. Orville Bulman prepared for Paris Showing Grand Rapids Herald. Nov. 1, 1958.	Box 1	Folder 6
GR Artist Bulman to Show Paintings in Palm Beach. Grand Rapids Herald, Mar. 17, 1957, pg. 7	Box 1	Folder 6
Grand Rapids Hobby Artist Teeters on Fame's Threshold. Peninsular Club Magazine. Dec. 1952.	Box 2	
Painting on Schedule. Newsweek, Nov. 10, 1952. P2007.012	Box 1	Folder 6.5

Related Material

See also a photocopy in folder 357-1-6.

Related Materials:

Related Materials

See also a photocopy in folder 357-1-6.

Newsclippings	Box 1.5	Folder 14
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Series II. Exhibit Catalogs & Flyers

Originals

Title/Description	Instances	
Orville Bulman, 1904-1978 : Fourth Exhibition of Paintings, December 15, 2008-January 23, 2009 / Edward and Deborah Pollack fine Art. 2008.095	Box 1	Folder 10.2
Orville Bulman, 1904-1978 : Recent Acquisitions, Edward and Deborah Pollack. Dec. 18, 2007-Jan. 15, 2008 2007.014.3	Box 1	Folder 10.1
Inspired Whimsy : the Genius of Orville Bulman : retrospective exhibition. Jan. 4-Feb. 28, 2005. Edward and Deborah Pollack, Palm Beach, Florida. www.orvillebulman.com 2004.086	Box 1	Folder 11

Bulmania II : An encore Retrospective Exhibition of the Art of Orville Bulman (1904-1978). Jan.24-Feb. 13, 2006. 2006.010	Box 1	Folder 10
Orville Bulman, Hammer Galleries. Recent Paintings, Oct. 30 – Nov. 10, 1973. 2006.010C	Box 1	Folder 9
Orville Bulman, Hammer Galleries. Interim Collection, ca. 1963. 2006.010C	Box 1	Folder 9
Orville Bulman : recent paintings. Mar. 14-Mar. 27, 1955. Worth Avenue Gallery, Palm Beach, Florida. 2006.010C. Includes a portrait photo image of Bulman.	Box 1	Folder 9

Photocopies, possibly incomplete.

Title/Description	Instances	
Orville Bulman : recent paintings. Grand Central Art Galleries, N.Y. Nov. 22 – Dec. 5, 1955. 2006.087	Box 1.5	Folder 6
Orville Bulman : Recent Paintings. Grand Central Art Galleries. N.Y. Oct. 14-26, 1957. [Exhibit catalog] c. 1 2004.060 / c. 2-3 2006.087	Box 1	Folder 12
Orville Bulman : Oeuvres Recentes, Oct. 1-14, 1959. Galerie Andre Weil, c.1-2 2006.087	Box 1.5	Folder 7
Orville Bulman. Nov. 2-Nov. 13, 1965. Hammer Galleries. c. 1 2004.060 / c. 2-3 2006.087	Box 1.5	Folder 8
Orville Bulman : Recent Paintings. Oct. 31-Nov. 11, 1967. Hammer Galleries. c. 1 2004.060 / c. 2-3 2006.087	Box 1	Folder 13
General		
Also, color photocopy of title page for this catalog. 2006.010C		
Orville Bulman : Recent Paintings. Nov. 4-Nov. 15, 1969. Hammer Galleries. c. 1 2004.060/ c. 2-3 2006.087	Box 1	Folder 14
Orville Bulman : Recent Paintings. Nov. 9-20, 1971. Hammer Galleries.	Box 1.5	Folder 9
Orville Bulman : Recent Paintings, Oct. 14-25, 1975. Hammer Galleries, N.Y. c. 1-2 2006.087	Box 1.5	Folder 10
"Orville Bulman has Written this Descriptive Catalog of Paintings in this Showing. Numbers Correspond to Numbers on the Paintings." n.d. [Source unknown, possibly a portion of an exhibit catalog]	Box 1.5	Folder 11
Orville Bulman : [exhibit catalog] Nov. 5-Nov. 16, n.d. Hammer Galleries. Copies 1-2 2006.087	Box 1.5	Folder 12
Flyers of Exhibits.	Box 1.5	Folder 13
Digital version of Bulman exhibit catalogs on a DVD. 2006.087	Box 1	Folder 15

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Series III. Library Exhibit

Title/Description	Instances	
Orville Bulman, 1904-1978. Case Exhibit.	Box 2	
<p>Title panel</p> <p><u>Physical Location</u>: The title panel of this exhibit is shared with the title panel for the case exhibit: The Eames Lounge Chair: an Icon of Modern Design. It is housed in Coll. 233 with the materials from that exhibit.</p>	Collection 233	Box 22

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Series IV. Original Artwork

Title/Description	Instances	
<p>[Map of Grand Rapids] ca. 1936. "Grand Rapids, a Good Place to Live"--prominent Center lettering top left and bottom left. 2007.045.</p> <p><u>Physical Location</u>: Hanging in the Vanderveen Center for the Book</p>		
<p>General</p>		
<p>Signed lower right: TO my very favorites Amy & Tom, Orville Bulman (Orvy) Mixed media on paper, laid on board. Black on crème, with red highlights. Frame is wood, black with red corners. 21 x 26 in. visible image in frame 30.5 x 35 in. Illustrated on a map grid, with liberties to the scale. Area illustrated is from the Grand River to Paris Rd., later Breton, and from Burton to Leonard. Includes cameo images such as Bulman's version of the 1831 Booth illustration.</p>		

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