

ARCHIVE OF AMERICAN ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM ACQUIRED BY EMORY UNIVERSITY

The Philip Pavia and Natalie Edgar Archive, a collection of documentary material revealing the birth of Abstract Expressionism in New York from 1948-70, has been acquired by the Robert W. Woodruff Library of Emory University.

Among the highlights of the archive are original writings by major figures in twentieth-century American art, including Robert Motherwell, Robert Rauschenberg, and John Cage, to name only a few. Also present are records of the 8th Street Club; original essays, lectures and manifestos published in *It Is: A Magazine for Abstract Art*; correspondence and other materials documenting the 23rd Street Workshop Club; and hundreds of original photographs.

Writings from Elaine de Kooning, Thomas Hess, Franz Kline, Philip Guston, Dore Ashton, Harold Rosenberg, Irving Sandler and Allan Kaprow document a time when the apex of the cultural world shifted from Paris to Lower Manhattan, and the new ideas of Abstract Expressionism were first being discussed and debated. Of particular interest is a letter by Alfred Barr tracing the history of the use and evolution of the term "Abstract Expressionism." The archive also includes a statement of philosophy written by Robert Motherwell.

"The Pavia-Edgar Archive is one of the last significant collections of Abstract Expressionist papers in private hands," says James Meyer, associate professor of art history at Emory. The archive includes a meticulous record of The Club, the famous artists' association attended by Jackson Pollock, Willem De Kooning, Barnett Newman, and others associated with Abstract Expressionism during the forties and fifties. It also contains the papers related to *It Is*, one of the significant 'little magazines' of the period, which Pavia edited. The archive is a significant addition to Emory's art history holdings, and," Meyer adds, "an invaluable resource for students and scholars."

Pavia, one of the artists who met with his contemporaries informally at the Waldorf Cafeteria, formalized the group into The Club, or the 8th Street Club, which he ran from 1948-55. After the club disbanded, he edited and published six issues of *It Is: A Magazine for Abstract Art*. The archive contains all the material published in *It Is* from 1955-65, along with many unpublished pieces. In 1965, members of the 8th Street Club asked Pavia to form another group. The resulting 23rd Street Workshop Club continued until 1970 during which time it organized a series of artistic events also documented by the archive.

"The archive is a treasure trove of manuscripts, correspondence, and photographs documenting the artistic debates and personal interchanges of the artists and writers who participated in two important phenomena in the New York avant-garde from the forties to the mid-sixties, the Club and the magazine *It Is*," says Clark Poling, Professor, Department of Art History, Emory University. "The participants represented both the generation of the Abstract Expressionists and the emerging Pop artists. This was the period that established the New York and the United States in a position of preeminence in contemporary western culture. Thus the primary materials in the archive are a boon to art historians and scholars of other aspects of American culture of that period."

In April 2004, at the age of 92, Pavia received a Guggenheim Award for a series of recent sculptures. An exhibition of his terracotta works will be presented in New York in March 2005. Pavia exhibited at the top galleries in the 1960s and 70s, including Kootz and Martha Jackson. In 1967 his traveling museum exhibition made stops in Washington DC and San Francisco. The tour culminated with a one-year exhibition in front of the Guggenheim Museum, New York, of his groundbreaking "Scattered Collage" (marble, 1967). He won two Pollock-Krasner Foundation Awards, received an Honorary Doctorate from Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and was named 2001 Artist Equity Honoree.

Artist and writer Natalie Edgar met husband Philip Pavia through the New York art scene in 1960. Edgar studied painting at Brooklyn College with Mark Rothko, Ad Reinhardt, Alfred Russell, and other luminaries from the era and later studied art history at Columbia University. When she graduated, she began a 14-year

writing post with ARTnews that placed her, she says, “right into the fray” of art in New York. An accomplished painter, Edgar has had ten solo exhibitions in New York.

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