Georgia O’Keeffe: The Poetry of Things

1999

Finding Aid

The Phillips Collection
Library and Archives
1600 21st Street NW
Washington D.C. 20009
www.phillipscollection.org
INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Collection Title: Georgia O’Keeffe: the poetry of things; exhibition records
Author/Creator: The Phillips Collection Curatorial Department. Beth Turner, Senior Curator and Elsa Smithgall, Associate Curator
Collection No:
Size: 20 linear feet
Bulk Dates: 1998 - 1999
Inclusive Dates: 1994 – 2000 [Note that there are photocopies of research materials dating from 1850 to 1999.]
Repository: The Phillips Collection Archives

INFORMATION FOR USERS OF THE COLLECTION

Restrictions: The collection contains restricted materials. Please contact Karen Schneider, Librarian, with any questions regarding access.
Handling Requirements: Care should be taken in handling Val E. Lewton’s folded installation drawings in Series 3, Box 15, Folder 5
Preferred Citation: The Phillips Collection Archives, Washington, D.C.
Publication and Reproduction Rights: See Karen Schneider, Librarian, for further information and to obtain required forms.
SPECIAL NOTE: With the exception of the Object Research, the Research Series materials in this collection were photocopied or acquired by The Phillips Collection with the appropriate permissions and/or payments, but are not owned by The Phillips Collection Archives, which consequently cannot grant copying, publication or reproduction rights to these materials. For these permissions, the originating repository must be contacted, which is the sole responsibility of the researcher (see ‘Related Material’ below for some contact information).

ABSTRACT

Georgia O’Keeffe: the poetry of things exhibition records contain materials created and collected by the Curatorial Department, The Phillips Collection, during the course of organizing the exhibition. Included are research, catalogue and exhibition planning files, as well as installation design.

HISTORICAL NOTE

In 1926, The Phillips Collection was the first museum to purchase a work by Georgia O’Keeffe. O’Keeffe’s work has been featured in exhibitions at The Phillips Collection since 1927. Prior to this exhibition, the most significant exhibition of O’Keeffe’s work was Two Lives: Georgia O’Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz, a Conversation in Paintings and Photographs in 1992.
SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection’s 1999 exhibition, “Georgia O’Keeffe: the poetry of things,” examines O’Keeffe’s personal relationship to ‘things’ as reflected in the objects she collected and used in her still life paintings throughout her career. As quoted by curator Beth Turner in the introduction to the exhibition catalogue, O’Keeffe herself said: “Nothing is less real than realism. It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis that we get at the real meaning of things.”

These curatorial records were collected and created in the course of researching, planning and executing the exhibition and its catalogue. The exhibition opened at The Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. on April 17, 1999 and continued until July 18, 1999. It then traveled to three other venues: The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico from August 7 through October 17, 1999; the Dallas Museum of Art in Dallas, Texas from November 7, 1999 through January 30, 2000; and finally, to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor from February 19 through May 14, 2000.

The primary creators of the catalogue and exhibition planning records in this collection were Beth Turner, Senior Curator and Elsa Smithgall, Associate Curator.

The collection consists of the research, catalogue and exhibition planning files of both curators, interfiled. These records consist of research materials assembled, catalogue and exhibition planning and execution documents such as legal and financial records, lender files (restricted), schedules, installation design (including drawings by Val E. Lewton) and checklists (restricted).

An extensive amount of research was conducted for this exhibition, examining and photocopying a large body of O’Keeffe’s correspondence at Yale University’s Beinecke Library, the New York Public Library and the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. The Beinecke correspondence ranges from 1907 through 1962, the bulk of which dates from the 1920s and 1930s. Significant and/or frequent correspondents are Alfred Stieglitz, Elizabeth Stieglitz Davidson, Sherwood Anderson, Dorothy Brett, Arthur Dove, Arthur Dow, Marsden Hartley, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Henry McBride, Lewis Mumford, Ida O’Keeffe and John Vanderpoel. The New York Public Library correspondence is between O’Keeffe and Mitchell Kennerly. The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation correspondence consists of letters between O’Keeffe and Wright. In addition, there are photocopies of correspondence dating from 1916 to 1954; from various other sources, the bulk of this correspondence dates from the 1920s and 1930s. Alfred Stieglitz, Henry McBride, Anita Pollitzer and Ettie Stettheimer are among the most frequent correspondents. Published correspondence from 1915 to 1955, includes correspondents Henry McBride, Duncan Phillips, Anita Pollitzer, Ettie Stettheimer and Alfred Stieglitz.

Secondary source research materials consist of photocopies of reviews, articles and portions of books written about artistic movements and about O’Keeffe’s life and work and those who influenced her. Included is information on Ezra Pound, Arthur Dow, Arthur Dove, Ernest Fenollosa and the Baha’i Faith. A central focus is the influence of Asian Art on O’Keeffe’s work,
particularly the role played by her teacher Arthur Wesley Dow and noted Asian scholar Ernest Fenollosa.

Object research files include images and draft descriptions, arranged by object type (i.e. bones, flowers).

The catalogue series records include copies of images (photographs and artworks), object research, legal material (restricted), budgets (restricted) and funding records, checklists (restricted), correspondence (correspondents of note are Barbara Buhler Lynes, author of the O'Keeffe catalogue raisonné and curator at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, and Barney Ebsworth), administrative records such as specifications and schedules, audio and wall text, and loan requests, responses and contracts.

**CUSTODIAL HISTORY AND ACQUISITION INFORMATION**

This collection is owned by The Phillips Collection, and was accessioned from the curators’ offices in accordance with the museum’s records schedule.

**PROCESSING AND DESCRIPTION INFORMATION**

**Date Processed:** Research materials processed December, 2007 by Dawn M. Sherman; additional processing of research materials and of the remainder of the collection by Valerie Vanden Bossche from January 30, 2008 through April 23, 2008.

**Processed By:** Valerie Vanden Bossche, UMD Field Study Graduate Student and Dawn M. Sherman, UMD Graduate Student.

**Processing Notes:** The collection contains exhibition-related records from two curators’ offices, resulting in a significant amount of duplicate documents. After an initial survey of the collection, many duplicate materials were identified and a number of documents were identified as of no future reference value for the collection, such as general housekeeping type documents, travel and duplication expenses / requests for reimbursement. In a meeting with the librarian, the curator and the processor, approval was given to weed duplicate documents (retaining those with hand-written notes) and travel and duplication documentation; also transparencies and duplicate photocopy images. It was also noted that the 13 to 15 notebooks in the collection were mostly duplicative, at a later meeting, the curator identified those to be kept (two and parts of another) the rest were disposed of except for a few research documents that were added to the research series. Duplicates and/or drafts of a number of contracts were found, the processor contacted the curator and librarian by e-mail and the decision was made to retain the signed or in absence of a signed copy, the most recent copy only of each contract. Folders containing restricted materials were marked with a red dot (see note above re ‘restrictions’).

Duplicate documents were weeded and the remaining documents interfiled. The original alphabetical arrangement of the catalogue and planning files series was maintained. Folder headings were maintained, but were re-written in some cases for greater clarity and accuracy. Metal paperclips were removed and replaced with plastic clips. Post Its were copied if necessary, otherwise removed. All documents were re-foldered in acid free folders.
NOTE: Lender files are restricted and have been omitted from this version of the Finding Aid; they may be viewed at The Phillips Collection Library with the permission of Karen Schneider, Librarian.

The Research Series has been arranged in five sub-series. The copied correspondence had originally been organized in individual folders arranged chronologically, resulting in numerous folders for the same correspondent. Copies of primary sources were clearly separate from copies of published (secondary) sources. There was also a distinct separation between Asian Art sources and the rest of the materials. This arrangement was modified in an effort to maximize researcher accessibility. The primary and secondary source materials were divided and condensed into three sub-series: Primary Sources, Secondary Sources and Asian Art. In addition Object Research and Staff Research sub-series were created from research material found within the Catalogue and Exhibition Planning materials.

Finding Aid Written By: Valerie Vanden Bossche, UMD Field Study Graduate Student and Dawn M. Sherman, UMD Graduate Student
Encoded By: Sarah Osborne Bender, Cataloging and Technical Services Librarian
Encoding Method: EAD using Tabnote

RELATED MATERIAL

Dallas Museum of Art  
1717 North Harwood Drive  
Dallas, TX 75201  
tel. 214-922-1200  
fax 214-954-0174  
www.dallasmuseumofart.org

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco  
Legion of Honor  
Lincoln Park  
100 34th St.  
San Francisco, CA 94121  
tel. 415-750-3600  
www.famsf.org

Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation  
Taliesien West  
P.O. Box 4430  
Scottsdale, AZ 85261-4430  
tel. 480-860-2700  
fax 480-391-4009  
www.franklloydwright.org/

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum
ARRANGEMENT OF THE COLLECTION

The collection is organized as three series:

Series 1: Research
Series 2: Catalogue
Series 3: Exhibition Planning

In the Research Series, Primary Sources correspondence is arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically within each folder. The Secondary Sources and Asian Art sub-series are arranged chronologically by publication date. The Staff and Other Research is arranged alphabetically. The Object Research sub-series arrangement maintains the general object categories created by the curators, with specific objects filed under those categories.

After consultation with the librarian and the curator, the alphabetical arrangement of the Catalogue and Exhibition Planning Series was maintained. Lender Files were made into a sub-series of the Exhibition Planning Series, arranged alphabetically with general files first, followed by loan requests granted, and loan requests not granted.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series 1: Research 1850 to 2000
Series 1 consists of research materials assembled in planning the catalogue and exhibition.

Sub-Series 1.1: Primary Sources 1907 - 1962

Sub-Series 1.2: Secondary Sources 1850 - 2000
Photocopied reviews, articles, book chapters. Arranged chronologically by year of publication.

Sub-Series 1.3: Asian Art 1850 – 1998 and undated
Photocopied articles, book chapters. Arranged chronologically by year of publication.

Sub-Series 1.4: Staff and other Research 1998 and undated
Photocopied materials, memos, notes. Arranged alphabetically.

Sub-Series 1.5: Object Research Undated [Note that dates on folders refer to dates artworks were created.] Photocopied images and descriptions. Original order maintained, categories such as “Bones” may be followed by types of bones such as “pelvis,” or “Flowers” followed by “Cannas,” “Iris” etc.; larger categories are loosely alphabetical.

Series 2: Catalogue 1997 – 1999
Series 2 consists of correspondence, financial, legal, notebook, photograph and transparency requests, and Yale University Press publisher records. Arranged alphabetically.

Series 3 consists of correspondence, financial, legal, image, design and administrative records. Arranged alphabetically.


Sub-Series 3.2: Lender files correspondence, lists, contracts. Arranged alphabetically.

Box Inventory

Series 1: Research Materials

Sub-series 1: Primary Sources 1907 – 1962
# Box 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Correspondence, Inventory of letters on file and Correspondence regarding use requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Correspondence, Barnes, Albert C., 1930</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Correspondence, ASD [?]</td>
</tr>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Correspondence, Bluemner, Oscar, 1925</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Correspondence, Bok Rodakiewicz Kiskadden, Margaret “Peggy,” 1927-1977</td>
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<td>Folder 6</td>
<td>Correspondence, Brett, Dorothy, 1928-1946</td>
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<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Correspondence, Davidson, Elizabeth Stieglitz, 1918-1923</td>
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<td>Folder 8</td>
<td>Correspondence, Deierhoi, William Hansen, 1914-1915</td>
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<td>Folder 9</td>
<td>Correspondence, Demuth, Charles, 1926</td>
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<td>Folder 10</td>
<td>Correspondence, Dove, Arthur, 1921-1943</td>
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<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>Correspondence, Dreier, Katherine Sophie, 1927</td>
</tr>
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<td>Folder 12</td>
<td>Correspondence, Einstein, William, 1936-1939</td>
</tr>
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<td>Folder 13</td>
<td>Correspondence, Hartley, Marsden, 1920</td>
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<td>Correspondence, Hartshorn, Cora, 1926</td>
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<td>Folder 15</td>
<td>Correspondence, Hunter, Russell Vernon, 1931-1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 16</td>
<td>Correspondence, James, Rebecca Salisbury, 1930-1932, 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 17</td>
<td>Correspondence, Kay-Scott, Cyril, 1927-1929</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 18</td>
<td>Correspondence, Luhan, Mable Dodge, 1925-1929</td>
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<td>Correspondence, Matthias, Blanche, [1926?]</td>
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<td>Folder 20</td>
<td>Correspondence, McBride, Henry, 1929-1940s</td>
</tr>
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<td>Correspondence, Mora, Luis F., 1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 22</td>
<td>Correspondence, Mumford, Lewis, 1927-1945</td>
</tr>
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<td>Folder 23</td>
<td>Correspondence, O’Keeffe, Ida, 1923-1938</td>
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<td>Folder 24</td>
<td>Correspondence, Stieglitz, Alfred, 1919-1924</td>
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<td>Folder 25</td>
<td>Correspondence, Stettheimer, Ettie, 1925-1944</td>
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<td>Folder 26</td>
<td>Correspondence, Sweeney, James Johnson, 1948</td>
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<td>Folder 27</td>
<td>Correspondence, Toomer, Jean, 1934</td>
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<td>Folder 28</td>
<td>Correspondence, Unknown, 1921 or 1931-1939</td>
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<td>Folder 29</td>
<td>Correspondence, Van Berkaloo Hale, Gerard, 1910-1914</td>
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<td>Folder 30</td>
<td>Correspondence, Vanderpoel, Mitchell, 1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 31</td>
<td>Correspondence and exhibition arrangement, Kennerly, Mitchell, 1921-1931 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 32</td>
<td>Correspondence, Wright, Frank Lloyd, 1933-1940s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Sub-series 2: Secondary Sources 1850 – 2000

| Folder 33 | Correspondence, Anderson, Sherwood, 1923-1924                              |
| Folder 34 | Correspondence, Bement, Alon, 1916                                         |
| Folder 35 | Correspondence, Bier, Elmira, 1946, 1947                                   |
| Folder 36 | Correspondence, Clapp, Frederick M., [1945]                                |
| Folder 37 | Correspondence, Dove, Arthur, 1938-1942                                    |
| Folder 38 | Correspondence, Dow, Arthur, 1917                                          |
Folder 39  Correspondence, Duncan, Charles, 1916
Folder 40  Correspondence, Gallup, Donald, 1952
Folder 41  Correspondence, Hunter, Russell Vernon, 1932-1933
Folder 42  Correspondence, Kennerly, Mitchell, 1929
Folder 43  Correspondence, Luhan, Mabel Dodge, 1929
Folder 44  Correspondence, Matthias, Blanche, 1926
Folder 45  Correspondence, McAlpin, David H., 1936

Sub-series 2: Secondary Sources 1850 – 2000

Box 2
Folder 1  Correspondence, McBride, Henry, 1927-1954
Folder 2  Correspondence, Millikin, William, 1930
Folder 3  Correspondence, Phillips, Duncan, 1946-1949
Folder 4  Correspondence, Pollitzer, Anita, 1915-1916
Folder 5  Correspondence, Stieglitz, Alfred, 1916-1937
Folder 6  Correspondence, Stettheimer, Ettie, 1927-1949
Folder 7  Correspondence, Strand, Paul, 1917-1933
Folder 8  Correspondence, Strand, Rebecca, 1929
Folder 9  Correspondence, Sweeney, James Johnson, 1945
Folder 10 Correspondence, Walker, John, 1949-1950
Folder 11 Correspondence, Zigrosser, Karl, 1944
Folder 12 Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1913-1915
          [1 of 2]
Folder 13 Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1913-1915
          [2 of 2]
Folder 14 Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1916-1919

Sub-series 2: Secondary Sources 1850 – 2000

Box 3
Folder 1  Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1920-1929
          [1 of 2]
Folder 2  Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1920-1929
          [2 of 2]
Folder 3  Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1931-1978
          [1 of 2]
Folder 4  Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1931-1978
          [2 of 2]
Folder 5  Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1980-1988

Box 4
Folder 1  Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1989
Folder 2  Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1990-1995
          [1 of 2]
Folder 3  Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1990-1995
Folder 4  Articles, Reviews, Book excerpts, O'Keeffe, 1996-2000

Sub-series 3:  Asian Art 1850 – 1998 and undated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
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</tbody>
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Sub-series 4:  Staff and other Research 1998 and undated

| Folder 6 | Staff notes and memos, 1998 |
| Folder 7 | Staff notes and bibliography, 1998 and undated |

Sub-series 4:  Staff and other Research 1998 and undated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
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Sub-series 5:  Object Research  Undated

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<td>Folder 1</td>
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Folder 41  Object Research, Flowers, Jimson Weed
Folder 42  Object Research, Flowers
Folder 43  Object Research, Cannas, Red Canna, 1923
Folder 44  Object Research, Cannas, Red Canna, 1924
Folder 45  Object Research, Cannas, Red Cannas, 1927

Box 8
Folder 1  Object Research, Irises, Black Iris III, 1926
Folder 2  Object Research, Irises, Dark Iris No. 2, 1927
Folder 3  Object Research, Irises, Dark Iris No. 1, 1927
Folder 4  Object Research, Orchids, Narcissa’s Last Orchid, 1941
Folder 5  Object Research, Orchids, Orchid, 1941
Folder 6  Object Research, Petunias, Black and Purple Petunias, 1925
Folder 7  Object Research, Petunias, Black Petunia and White Morning Glory I, 1926
Folder 8  Object Research, Petunias, Black Petunia, White Morning Glory III, 1926
Folder 9  Object Research, Petunias, Petunia No. 2, 1924
Folder 10 Object Research, Petunias, Petunia, 1925
Folder 11 Object Research, Fruit
Folder 12 Object Research, Fruit, Alligator Pears in Basket No. 2, 1923
Folder 13 Object Research, Fruit, Apple Family I, 1920
Folder 14 Object Research, Fruit, Apple Family A, c 1921
Folder 15 Object Research, Fruit, Green Apple on Black Plate, c 1921
Folder 16 Object Research, Fruit, Mask with Golden Apple, 1924
Folder 17 Object Research, Leaves, leaf images
Folder 18 Object Research, Leaves, leaves
Folder 19 Object Research, Leaves, Brown and Tan Leaves, 1928
Folder 20 Object Research, Leaves, Dark and Lavender Leaves, 1931
Folder 21 Object Research, Leaves, Leaf Motif No. 2, 1924
Folder 22 Object Research, Leaves, My Autumn, 1929
Folder 23 Object Research, Other, Blue, Black and Gray
Folder 24 Object Research, Other, doors
Folder 25 Object Research, Other, My Last Door, 1954
Folder 26 Object Research, Other, 59th Street Studio, 1919
Folder 27 Object Research, Other, Kachina and Kokopelli
Folder 28 Object Research, Other, natural issues
Folder 29 Object Research, Other, Dead Rabbit with Copper Pot, 1908
Folder 30 Object Research, Other, Dead Tree, Bear Lake, 1929
Folder 31 Object Research, Other, Fishhook from Hawaii, No. 1, 1939
Folder 32 Object Research, Other, From the Lake, No. 3, 1924
Folder 33 Object Research, Other, Ladder to the Moon, 1958
Folder 34  Object Research, Other, Lake George Window
Folder 35  Object Research, Other, Mule Skull with Turkey Feathers, 1936
Folder 36  Object Research, Other, Patio Door with Green Leaf, 1956
Folder 37  Object Research, Other, Pink Dish and Green Leaves, 1928
Folder 38  Object Research, Other, Plasticene Sculpture, 1916
Folder 39  Object Research, Other, Ranchos Church
Folder 40  Object Research, Other, Sculpture, 1945
Folder 41  Object Research, Other, Trees Udall – Finding a Self in Nature
Folder 42  Object Research, Other, The Lawrence Tree, 1929
Folder 43  Object Research, Other, Tree Trunks with Snow, 1946
Folder 44  Object Research, Other, White Birch, Lake George, 1926
Folder 45  Object Research, Other, Turkey Feathers in Indian Pot, 1935
Folder 46  Object Research, Photographs, Georgia O’Keeffe: A Portrait Sculpture, 1920
Folder 47  Object Research, Photographs, Georgia O’Keeffe (photograph of O’Keeffe’s Hands with Skull) 1930
Folder 48  Object Research, Rocks
Folder 49  Object Research, Rocks, Red and Pink Rocks, 1938
Folder 50  Object Research, Rocks, Three Small Rocks Big, 1937
Folder 51  Object Research, Shells
Folder 52  Object Research, Shells, Closed Clam Shell, 1926
Folder 53  Object Research, Shells, From a Shell, 1930
Folder 54  Object Research, Shells, Open Clam Shell, 1926
Folder 55  Object Research, Shells, Shell, c 1928
Folder 56  Object Research, Shells, Shell and Old Shingle No. VI, 1926
Folder 57  Object Research, Shells, Shell on Red, 1931
Folder 58  Object Research, Shells, Shell No. III, 1928

Series 2: Catalogue 1997 – 1999

Box 9
Folder 1  Awards, Promotions, Reviews, 1999-2000
Folder 2  Catalogue notebook, front and pocket [1 of 8]
Folder 3  Catalogue notebook, [2 of 8]
Folder 4  Catalogue notebook, [3 of 8]
Folder 5  Catalogue notebook, [4 of 8]
Folder 6  Catalogue notebook, [5 of 8]
Folder 7  Catalogue notebook, [6 of 8]
Folder 8  Catalogue notebook, [7 of 8]
Folder 9  Catalogue notebook, [8 of 8]
Folder 10: Catalogue distribution, complementary, 1999
Folder 11: General specifications, undated
Folder 12: Guest essayist, contract, correspondence etc., 1996-1999
Folder 13: Guest essayist, M.P. Balge, CV and writing samples, 1997
Folder 14: Images not in catalogue, from notebook 2

Box 10

Folder 1: Independent contractor, 1998
Folder 2: Miscellaneous correspondence, 1998-1999
Folder 3: Permissions correspondence, 1998-1999 [1 of 2]
Folder 5: Photograph and Transparency requests, 1998
Folder 6: Photograph requests and returns, 1998-1999
Folder 7: Production schedule, 1998
Folder 8: Publishing bids, spreadsheet, undated
Folder 9: Publishers’ bids, 1998
Folder 10: Publisher’s notebook

Box 11

Folder 1: Rights and Permissions Contracts, 1998 [1 of 3]
Folder 2: Rights and Permissions Contracts, 1998 [2 of 3]
Folder 3: Rights and Permissions Contracts, 1998 [3 of 3]
Folder 4: Style sheet, end notes reference, 1998
Folder 5: Yale correspondence, 1998-1999


Sub-Series 1: Planning documents

Box 12

Folder 1: Agreement, Co-organizing, Dallas Museum of Art, 1998-1999
Folder 2: Agreement, exhibition venue – Dallas Museum of Art, 1997-1999
Folder 4: Attendance figures for: Two Lives – Georgia O’Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz
Folder 5: Audio guide, 1998-1999 [1 of 2]
Folder 6: Audio guide, 1999 [2 of 2]
Folder 7: Audio Guide – Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, undated
Folder 8  Budget, 1997-1999 and undated

Box 13
Folder 1  Checklist, 1996 and undated
Folder 2  Checklist by Lender, 1997
Folder 3  Checklist by Venue, 1996-1999 and undated
Folder 4  Concepts for exhibition, 1996 and undated
Folder 5  Correspondence, Director’s Office, 1997
Folder 6  Correspondence, Internal, 1997
Folder 7  Correspondence, External, general, 1996-2000
Folder 8  Correspondence, inquiries regarding additional venues, 1997-1999
Folder 9  Correspondence, Masheck [Joseph], undated
Folder 10  Correspondence, positive feedback
Folder 11  Correspondence, Dallas Museum of Art, Gates, 1995-2000
Folder 12  Education budget, undated
Folder 13  Education, programming, 1998, 1999 and undated
Folder 14  Education, programming, planning, 1998-1999
Folder 15  Exhibition layout, Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, 1999 and undated
Folder 16  Exhibition history, undated

Box 14
Folder 1  Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, correspondence, 1997-2000 and undated
Folder 2  Funding, NEA Grant, 1998-2000
Folder 3  Funding, internal correspondence, 1998-2000 and undated
Folder 4  Funding, external correspondence, 1997-1999
Folder 5  Funding notebook, undated [1 of 2]
Folder 6  Funding notebook, undated [2 of 2]
Folder 7  Funding, possible, Philip Morris, 1998, 1999
Folder 8  Funding, possible Henry Luce Foundation, 1997-1998
Folder 9  Funding proposals, 1998 and undated
Folder 10  Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, articles, venue

Box 15
Folder 1  Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, correspondence, venue, 1996-1999
Folder 2  Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation, planning correspondence, 1994-1998
Folder 3  German venue, correspondence, proposals, checklist, 1998-1999
Folder 4  Images considered, not used in exhibition
Folder 5  Installation plan, drawings by Val E. Lewton, 1998-1999
Folder 6  Installation, Art Pottery, Objects, 1999 and undated
Folder 7  Installation, books, loan agreements, 1998-1999
Folder 8  Installation, books, research, 1998 and undated
Folder 9  Installation, case information, notes, research, undated
Folder 10 Installation, textile, pottery research, 1998 and undated
Folder 11 Institutional holdings, 1995-1997 and undated

Box 16
Folder 1  Insurance, Registrar issues, 1998-1999
Folder 2  Letterhead for Georgia O'Keeffe exhibition
Folder 3  Lynes, Barbara Buhler, correspondence, 1998
Folder 4  Marketing plan
Folder 5  National Historical Landmark designation, Georgia O'Keeffe home and studio, undated
Folder 6  Notes on readings, undated
Folder 7  Other O'Keeffe exhibitions, 1998 and undated
Folder 8  Opening events, 1999
Folder 9  Panel discussion on Georgia O'Keeffe, the poetry of things, at The Phillips Collection, 5-12-99
Folder 10 Poetter, Jochen, correspondence regarding conflict in exhibition schedules, 1996-1997
Folder 11 Product development, correspondence, 1999
Folder 12 Programming, 1998-1999
Folder 13 Project Planning Meetings, notes, 1997, 1999
Folder 14 Project summary
Folder 15 Public Relations, Publicity, 1998-1999
Folder 16 Quotes, Georgia O'Keeffe
Folder 17 Quotes, Georgia O'Keeffe for funding notebooks

Box 17
Folder 1  Research trip to Santa Fe, Beth Turner, 1996
Folder 2  Reviews of exhibition, 1999
Folder 3  Sales Records of O'Keeffe artworks, 1998
Folder 4  Schedule, exhibition, 1997-1998
Folder 5  Security issues, Tom Gillely, 4/15/97
Folder 6  Title of exhibition, 1998
Folder 7  Wall text material [1 of 2]
Folder 8  Wall text material [2 of 2]
Folder 9  Whitney Museum of American Art, correspondence, 1996

Sub-Series 2: Lender files  SEE 'PROCESSING NOTES' ABOVE

Box 18
Folder 1  Anonymous Lenders
Folder 2  Draft loan letters, undated
Folder 3  Forwarded loan letters, known lenders, 1997
Folder 4  Forwarded loan letters, unknown lenders
Folder 5  Lenders to locate, 1997
Folder 6   Loan follow-up, 1998
Folder 7   Loan Status [Reports], 1997-1998 [1 of 2]
Folder 8   Loan Status [Reports], 1997-1998 [2 of 2]
Folder 9
Folder 10
Folder 11
Folder 12
Folder 13
Folder 14
Folder 15
Folder 16
Folder 17
Folder 18
Folder 19
Folder 20
Folder 21
Folder 22
Folder 23
Folder 24
Folder 25

**Box 19**

Folder 1
Folder 2
Folder 3
Folder 4
Folder 5
Folder 6
Folder 7
Folder 8
Folder 9
Folder 10
Folder 11
Folder 12
Folder 13
Folder 14
Folder 15
Folder 16
Folder 17
Folder 18
Folder 19
Folder 20

**Box 20**

Folder 1
Folder 2