

Malcolm Davis, Artist, Papers A&M 4263

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1970-2015



Title Statement

Malcolm Davis, Artist, Papers A&M 4263

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2025/04/29 Collection was further processed to add series and improve preservation. Some box numbers have changed, so any citations made prior to this date may no longer be accurate. A document of old versus new box numbers is available upon request.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

A&M 4263

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

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Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/6319

Unit Date

1970-2015

Language

English .

Creator

Davis, Malcolm H., 1937-2011

Extent

11.46 Linear Feet 5 record cartons, 15 in. each; 11 document cases, 5 in. each; 3 document cases, 2.5 in. each

Physical Location

West Virginia and Regional History Center / West Virginia University / 1549 University Avenue / P.O. Box 6069 / Morgantown, WV 26506-6069 / Phone: 304-293-3536 / URL: West Virginia & Regional History Center

Repository

West Virginia and Regional History Center

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Biographical / Historical

Malcolm Herbert Davis, Jr. (1937-2011) was an internationally acclaimed ceramic artist who first began working with clay at the age of forty. Previously, Davis served as a campus minister at the Ecumenical Campus Ministry, George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He was also a well-known social activist. A graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York City and ordained United Church of Christ clergy, he considered his life in clay as a continued ministry. According to Davis, the making of pots was "a way to celebrate the mundane rituals of daily life and to make them holy."

Davis was most well-known for the shino glaze recipe (known as "Malcolm's Shino") that he developed, which is still in use by potters in the United States and Europe.

Davis first exhibited his ceramics in 1991 at the Greenwich House Nancy Hartsock Gallery in New York City. His work was also featured at the Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show, the Smithsonian Craft Show, and the American Craft Council Shows, and he was a regular participant in the Annual Pottery Invitational for over 30 years. His work can be found in numerous museum collections, including the American Craft Museum (New York City), the American Museum of Ceramic Art (Pomona, CA), the Chein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art (Alfred, NY), Mobach Collection (Utrecht, Holland) and a permanent collection in Yixing, China. He was the recipient of numerous awards, including four grants from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Known internationally for his functional porcelain shinoware, Davis taught and lectured widely throughout the U.S., Canada, and Italy. He was also featured in over 15 books and publications in the U.S. and Europe.

Though born in Newport News, Virginia, Davis spent much of his life in Washington, D.C. and kept his studio and kiln in Tallmansville, West Virginia.

[This note is based upon contents of a funeral program in this collection.]

Scope and Contents

Papers of Malcolm Davis, noted potter and ceramic artist. The collection includes slides of his work, some correspondence, shino glaze recipe cards, sketchbooks, photographs, and research books regarding ceramics. Davis was known for his shino pottery with a distinctive glaze, and much of the collection relates to that work.

This collection is organized into six series:

Series 1. Slides and Photographs, 1970s-2000s: Images of Davis's work, exhibitions and glaze samples, as well as his West Virginia studio and various teaching engagements. Works include shino and celadon teapots, vases, jars, platters, "white pots," Penland celadon miniatures, sake sets, casseroles, vessels, honey jars and planters.

Series 2. Notebooks and Sketchbooks, undated: Notes including Davis's designs, glaze experimentation, kiln logs, international travels and more.

Series 3. Professional Papers, 1970-2015: Materials relating to Davis's career, such as workshop handouts, exhibitions, grants awarded and resumes.

Series 4. Publications, 1977-2012: Books, magazines and journals related to ceramists and their work from the United States, Europe, Asia, Eastern Russia and the Middle East. Magazine and journal titles include Ceramics Review, Clay Times, Ceramics Monthly and The Studio Potter.

Series 5. Shino Recipes, undated: Hundreds of recipe cards for Davis's famous shino glazes.

Series 6. Correspondence and Personal Papers, 1993-2012: Letters and emails from friends and fellow artists including Jack Troy, Jim Robinson, Val Cushing, David Woodin, Tom Coleman, Pete Pennel and David Leach, as well as materials from Davis's memorial and career retrospective and miscellaneous articles of personal significance.

Keywords

Art and artists

Ceramics

Davis, Malcolm H., 1937-2011

Davis, Judy

Description of Subordinate Components

Series 1. Slides and Photographs

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233186

Unit Date 1970s-2000s

Conditions Governing Access

CDs in box 5b must be digitized for research access. Researchers must contact the West Virginia & Regional History Center reference department in advance.

Scope and Contents

This series includes images of Davis's work, exhibitions and glaze samples, as well as his West Virginia studio and various teaching engagements.

Slides

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233187

Unit Date 1970s-2000s

Mixed Materials 1a (Box)

Mixed Materials 1b (Box)

Scope and Contents

Images of shino and celadon teapots, vases, jars, platters, "white pots," Penland celadon miniatures, sake sets, casseroles, vessels, honey jars and planters.

Slides and Photographs

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233188

Unit Date 1970s-2000s

Mixed Materials 5a (Box)

Scope and Contents

Images of early stoneware and workshops including Davis at the wheel in his West Virginia studios. Also includes photos from Retrospective (June 2012), The School at Old Church, Demarest, NJ.

CDs of Photographs

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233215

Unit Date 2012, undated

Mixed Materials 5b (Box)

Conditions Governing Access

Materials must be digitized for research access. Researchers must contact the West Virginia & Regional History Center reference department in advance.

Scope and Contents

Includes photos of first shino Endless Variations exhibition, 2012 memorial service and the 2010 NCECA closing address.

Series 2. Notebooks and Sketchbooks

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233189

Unit Date undated

Scope and Contents

This series contains notes including Davis's designs, glaze experimentation, kiln logs, international travels and more.

China and Switzerland Notebooks

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233190

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Kiln Firing Logbooks

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233191

Unit Date 2003-2011

Mixed Materials 3 (Box)

Notebooks and Sketchbooks

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233216

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 12 (Box)

Scope and Contents

Includes notebook 3 (glaze calculation), notebook 4 (general), sketchbook 1 (vessel forms and some recipes), sketchbooks 2-4 (vessel forms), and a folder of miscellaneous material.

Series 3. Professional Papers

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233192

Unit Date 1970-2015 and undated

Scope and Contents

This series contains materials relating to Davis's career, such as workshop handouts, exhibitions, grants awarded and resumes.

West Virginia Grants

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233193

Unit Date 2004-2006

Mixed Materials 4 (Box)

Container 1 (Folder)

DC Grants

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233194

Unit Date 1990-1991, 1993, 1996, 1998

Mixed Materials 4 (Box)

Container 2-5 (Folder)

Resumes

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233195

Unit Date 2003-2008

Mixed Materials 4 (Box)

Container 6 (Folder)

Brochures and Website

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233196

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 4 (Box)

Container 7-8 (Folder)

Business Orders

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233197

Unit Date 1986

Mixed Materials 4 (Box)

Container 9 (Folder)

News Clippings

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233198

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 4 (Box)

Container 10 (Folder)

Workshops, Exhibitions and Research

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233199

Unit Date 1970s-2015

Mixed Materials 6 (Box)

Scope and Contents

Includes handouts from Davis's shino workshops, kiln plans, glaze recipes from other ceramicists and programs from exhibitions featuring Davis.

Assorted Exhibition Programs

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233200

Unit Date 1970s-2005

Mixed Materials 9a (Box)

Mixed Materials 9b (Box)

Series 4. Publications

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233201

Unit Date 1979-2012

Scope and Contents

This series contains books, magazines and journals related to ceramists and their work from the United States, Europe, Asia, Eastern Russia and the Middle East. Magazine and journal titles include Ceramics Review, Clay Times, Ceramics Monthly and The Studio Potter.

Ceramics Books

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233202

Unit Date 1985-2001

Mixed Materials 8a (Box)

Mixed Materials 8b (Box)

Ceramics Monthly

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233203

Unit Date 1984-2012

Mixed Materials 7 (Box)

Assorted Ceramics Magazines

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233204

Unit Date 1991-2000

Mixed Materials 13 (Box)

Scope and Contents

Publications include Ceramics Review, Clay Times, The Studio Potter

Ceramics Technique Handbooks

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233205

Unit Date 1979-1997

Mixed Materials 14 (Box)

Series 5. Recipes

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233206

Unit Date undated

Scope and Contents

This series contains hundreds of recipe cards for Davis's famous shino glazes.

Recipes

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233207

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 10 (Box)

Recipes and Notes

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233208

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 11 (Box)

Scope and Contents

Notebooks include notebook 1 (glaze tests) and notebook 2 (kiln log).

Series 6. Correspondence and Personal Papers

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233209

Unit Date 1993-2012

Scope and Contents

This series contains letters and emails from friends and fellow artists including Jack Troy, Jim Robinson, Val Cushing, David Woodin, Tom Coleman, Pete Pennel and David Leach, as well as materials from Davis's memorial and career retrospective and miscellaneous articles of personal significance.

David Woodin Correspondence

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233210

Unit Date 1997-2001 and undated

Mixed Materials 15 (Box)

Container 1 (Folder)

James Robinson Correspondence

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233211

Unit Date 1992-1996 and undated

Mixed Materials 15 (Box)

Container 2 (Folder)

Correspondence, Miscellaneous

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/233212

Unit Date 1993-2007 and undated

Mixed Materials 15 (Box)

Container 3 (Folder)

Davis Memorial**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/233213**Unit Date** 2012**Mixed Materials** 15 (Box)**Container** 4 (Folder)**Scope and Contents**

Memorial service program, Washington Post and Boston Globe obituaries, Ceramics Monthly and other published tributes.

Miscellaneous Articles**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/233214**Unit Date** undated**Mixed Materials** 15 (Box)**Container** 5 (Folder)