

NINA CULLINAN PAPERS

Filmed by the Archives of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution. Lent for filming
by Miss Nina Cullinan, Houston, Texas in
March, 1979.

NINA CULLINAN PAPERS

Contents in order of filming:

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Correspondence

1961 - 1964

Theta Sigma Phi

The National Fraternity for Women in Journalism

Houston Professional Chapter

Houston, Texas

March 11, 1961

Miss Nina J. Cullinan
3694 Willowick Dr.
Houston 27, Texas

Dear Miss Cullinan,

I have the pleasure to inform you that you have been selected to receive Theta Sigma Phi's Matrix Award for Outstanding Civic Endeavor as a result of your contributions to the people of our city. The award will be presented at our annual "Ladies of the Press Breakfast" to be held at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, May 7, in the Emerald Room at the Shamrock Hilton Hotel. Four other women similarly will be honored for their exceptional work in the fields of Education, Business or Professional, The Arts and Journalism.

The members of Theta Sigma Phi hope that you will be as happy to receive the honor as we are to bestow it. Please let us know if you will be able to attend the Breakfast as one of our special guests and personally accept the award. At the same time, we should greatly appreciate a list of persons or groups you would particularly like invited to attend the breakfast. We ask for this information in order to reach the organizations before their April meetings for this announcement. For that reason, our invitations committee does much of its work in March.

It is my personal pleasure to have a share in recognizing your civic contributions and I am eagerly awaiting your reply with great hopes that you will find it convenient to accept the award and attend the breakfast May 7.

Sincerely yours,

Elaine H. Fritchett

Elaine H. Fritchett,
Breakfast Chairman,
Theta Sigma Phi

1001 Taylorcrest Rd.
Houston 24, Texas

*Miss Nina (Award) ✓
Miss Phil (Education)
Edna (Award) (Gift)
The (Civic Endeavor)*

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

February 5, 1962

Dear Miss Cullinan:

The Museum is planning a reception to view a group of fourteen mediaeval enamels from the collection of the late Mr. Simon Seligmann Friday evening, February 9 at 5:00.

We feel you might be interested in seeing these with a group of close friends of the Museum before this exhibition is opened to the public.

We will be very happy if you can join us on Friday evening.

Sincerely yours,

James Johnson Sweeney

JJS:mc

JAMES H. DURBIN

30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
NEW YORK 20, N. Y.

April 2, 1962

Dear Nina,

Thank you for your note of March 30th enclosing copy of the Museum's report on the Endowment Funds. Time has indeed rewarded your generosity to the Museum, and this I know gives you the satisfaction that comes with a well done job.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J. Durbin', with a long diagonal slash extending from the bottom right of the signature.

Miss Nina J. Cullinan
3694 Willowick Road
Houston 19, Texas

The Museum itself continues to be a striking memorial to your brother and father.

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

JAMES JOHNSON WARENEY, DIRECTOR

October 16, 1962

Dear Miss Cullinan:

I am enclosing a carbon of my letter to Mies van der Rohe telling him of your suggestion that he visit Houston.

With all kind regards,

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

JJS:sa

Enclosure

Miss Nina Cullinan
3694 Willowick Road
Houston 19, Texas

C O P Y

October 16, 1962

Dear Mies:

I am just back a fortnight from Mexico, where I had the privilege of seeing your Bacardi offices inside and out. It was very gratifying to me to stand in the interior and look across the open space of the first floor. I was sorry that Laura was not with me. I know how much she also would have enjoyed it.

I have just been talking with Miss Nina Cullinan about it and about you. She remarked what a fine thing it would be if you could come down to Houston for a day and a night and see Cullinan Hall as it is. It would mean a great deal to me to hear the suggestions I know you could offer toward realizing more fully what you had in mind in its design. And it goes without saying I would enjoy a day or two with you, as I know Miss Cullinan would also.

Miss Cullinan's suggestion was that you should be entirely by yourself without interruptions while here. By that I mean no more social activity than you wish -- none at all if you feel that way.

I do hope you can make it. All warm regards.

As ever,

JJS:sa

Mr. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
200 East Pierson Street
Chicago, Illinois

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY, DIRECTOR

November 14, 1962

Dear Miss Cullinan:

This morning I had a letter finally from Mies apologizing for his delay in writing. He says that ever since his return from Europe last June he has been having "a bad time with arthritis and travel has been out of the question." "Tomorrow, however," he adds, "I am entering the hospital for a minor operation. It is believed that it will improve my condition so eventually, with luck, I may be able to see you and Miss Cullinan in Houston."

It is too bad to hear that he has been having such a difficult season, but I hope that his optimistic anticipation will be borne out. It would be good if he could get down here before we take the current show away, but I am afraid this now will not be possible.

With all kind regards,

Sincerely,

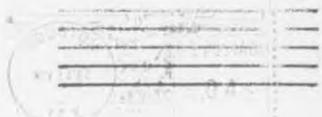


JJS:sa

Miss Nina Cullinan
3694 Willowick Road
Houston 19, Texas

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

1001 BISBONNET L HOUSTON 5 TEXAS



Miss Nina Cullinan
3694 Willowick Road
Houston 19, Texas

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY, DIRECTOR

November 17, 1962

Dear Miss Cullinan:

I have wanted to speak to you about the replacement of the donor's plaque in Cullinan Hall in another location.

I must go to Washington on Monday, but hope on my return you will let me call you to have your advice and wishes in the matter.

With all kind regards,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long trailing line extending downwards and to the right.

JJS:sa

Miss Nina Cullinan
3694 Willowick Road
Houston 19, Texas

HOUSTON *Symphony* SOCIETY

SIR JOHN BARBIROLI, CONDUCTOR IN CHIEF

TOM M. JOHNSON, MANAGER • MUSIC HALL • HOUSTON 2, TEXAS • CAPITOL 2-9823

May 2, 1963

Miss Nina J. Cullinan
3694 Willowick
Houston 19, Texas

Dearest Nina:

As you know, we are looking forward to a 50th Anniversary year for our Orchestra which should even more firmly establish its pre-eminence in the musical world.

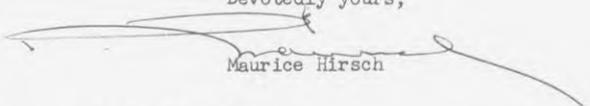
I would like very much to pay a personal call, but at the present time I am still under some restrictions and am taking this means of asking you to continue the support of the Symphony.

I believe you will take added pride in the accomplishments of our Orchestra if you know more in detail what your assistance to the Houston Symphony Society is helping to achieve in our community, and I would personally deeply appreciate it if you would read the enclosed copy of a letter I recently wrote to our Manager, Mr. Johnson.

We need your continued assistance and I am enclosing the card and would be very grate if you would return it to me at your earliest convenience.

With my fondest greetings, I am

Devotedly yours,


Maurice Hirsch

MH: jw

Enclosures

Dearest Nina:
I know you don't need
urging to do what you can!
We missed you at our luncheon,
and you would have taken great pride in
hearing the many enthusiastic comments about
Cullinan Hall! Much love.


July 21, 1963

Dear Miss Cullinan:

Three things I've had on my mind:

(1) We never properly thanked you for a delightful dinner when Miss Ashton was with you.

(2) I still have and have not yet tried your French Bread recipe. I fade out on cooking in hot weather, but when we return from Vermont in a month I shall bake ^{from} and report on and return your recipe.

(3) Last week, after four days of museum-going in New York, I spent an hour in and around Cullinan Hall while my children were in a class. It was a relaxed and exhilarating experience to realize that I



Miss Nina Cullinan
3694 Willowick
Houston, Texas

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got the same kind of lift
from that hour as I get
when I'm at the Guggenheim
or the Frick. I wanted you
to know this because it
is true.

affectionately,
Lyn

MRS CAMPBELL GEESLIN

HOUSTON 25, TEXAS

Rath, Carrowbeg,
Westport, Co. Mayo
— Ireland

Dear Nina, (timidly, in return),

Forgive me for not leaving written long ago in reply to your letter of weeks past regarding the Mies Building campaign. At the time, you wrote that you, S.I. and Hugo were all deeply involved with the Alley Theatre Drive. But I realized that nothing could be accomplished in a related area until that was concluded.

I have been reading during the fortnight or three weeks of the amazing achievement of the Alley — rather, of Houston, for the Alley, ~~pass~~ was delighted as I am sure all Houston is.

Just recently in Dublin, in a conversation with one of the sponsors of the Design Center there for which Mies has been asked to draw up the plans I gathered that Mies recently had been not at all well.

AIR MAIL

PAR AVION
AERPOST
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Miss Nina Cullinan
3694 Willowick Road
Houston 19 TEXAS

U.S.A.

I could not get any definite information and hope that my informant merely referred to Olie's condition, with which we are all acquainted. But this report stirred up once more the worry that so frequently troubles me.

What you say about the importance of a comprehensive campaign aiming at the full realization of the building is perfectly correct. Still I wish the plan could be worked out in such a way that a request - or commission to Olie to complete the drawings would not need to be held off until the money for the complete construction of the building had been obtained. The time that might be required to complete such a goal worries me by the possibility of losing all should any thing happen to Olie in the meanwhile. If only some scheme could be devised the first step of which would be the raising of the funds for the drawings - with the authority to commission them as soon as it was raised, while the campaign to raise money for the rest went on, I would feel less worried.

D. J. Hoewer
Raitt, Cambridge,
Westport Co Mass
Ireland.

I hope now that the Staley is a fait accompli
we can now go ahead with this project — now
before it is too late.

Forgive me for worrying, but my conversation
with Michael Scott's friend in Dublin troubled me.

And all Laura and my bound regards
to you. We look forward to seeing you now
very soon

Sincerely


September fifteenth.

HILDE BRUCH, M.D.

NEW YORK 28, N.Y.

TEMPLETON 1-2323

April 21, 1964

Dear Miss Cullinan

not knowing whether you see the Saturday Review regularly, I wanted to be sure that you would not miss the write-up on the Houston falling.

I was delighted to see it - and hope you feel very proud. You should!

I also thought you might be interested to learn that I have accepted Dr. Fogel's invitation to join his staff. I look forward to moving to Houston in September -
the news - sincerely - Hilde Bruch

N.Y. 28



Miss Nina Cullinan
3694 Willowick
Houston, Texas

Notes of a Peripatetic Gallerygoer

IN THE heady if sometimes disconcerting atmosphere nebulously called "the New York art world," we tend to overlook propitious straws in the wind from other parts of the country and even from our own small island. Briefly described below are several such "straws" that have particularly impressed me during recent months.

Topping the list is the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, where in three years an extraordinary revitalization has taken place under the leadership of a new director, James Johnson Sweeney. Buying with obsessive fervor, knowledge, and courage, Mr. Sweeney has wisely concentrated on sculpture—often monumental pieces that have stunning impact when seen in Cullinan Hall, a celebrated modern wing designed by Mies van der Rohe. Here one finds not merely good examples but definitive masterworks by such contemporary artists as Calder, Chillida, and Consagra. In fact, nowhere in the world is Calder so brilliantly represented. Mr. Sweeney has also tracked down a group of notable primitive carvings from Africa, Latin America, and the North and South Pacific. In contrast, a sophisticated, larger-than-life-size bronze figure of Ephebus by a Greek sculptor from the school of Polykletus is a work of such superlative subtlety as to leave one breathless.

In Washington, the newest art event is Philip Johnson's recently completed wing for the Robert Woods Bliss Collection of Pre-Columbian Art at Dumbarton Oaks. This small building, which everywhere opens out on handsomely landscaped gardens, is a flawless setting for superb art from the Olmec, Mayan, Incan, and other Pre-Columbian cultures. The museum and the collection act as an object lesson in selectivity. Only examples of the highest quality are shown in uncluttered surroundings where every detail, every texture, every color complements the art itself.

Out West the Oklahoma Printmakers Society, founded six years ago by seven citizens of Oklahoma City, sponsors an annual national survey of prints, watercolors, and drawings from which, miraculously, it sells better than one-third of the works shown. The exhibition (an excellent one, as a rule) is judged each year by a well-known professional but is otherwise efficiently administered entirely by volunteers. The purpose of the organization, put succinctly by one of its

officers, is "to bring good art to Oklahoma while aiding good artists and avoiding factionalism." A small group of intelligent citizens working together without pomp or desire for prestige accomplishes more than many overorganized, overpublicized institutions.

Also noteworthy is the Winston-Salem Gallery of Fine Arts in North Carolina, which has made history as the first full-time, nonprofit sales organization devoted to art in the South. Opened in 1956, it sells and rents works selected from a five-state area by competent professional jurors. The gallery, located on the main square of Old Salem, a beautiful Moravian town now being restored, is again run by a dedicated staff composed almost exclusively of volunteers.

Last December eighteen sculptors opened their own cooperative gallery in St. Louis, a venture described by art critic George McCue in the *Post-Dispatch* as filling a "long-felt need for an avenue of communication between sculptors and architects." In addition, he said, it offers "a businesslike operation, taking over the sculptor's marketing problems while allowing the artist to concentrate on his work." Called the Sculptors Gallery, the venture not only arranges frequent exhibitions but sponsors numbered editions of small pieces that can be produced economically and yet properly supervised so that quality is not forfeited. An indication of the interest generated by this organization was the number of visitors (2,500) that crowded the opening.

The Primitive Museum and Asia House in New York and the Phillips Collection in Washington continue to reassure us as classic examples of first-rate specialized galleries. One can always depend on them for well-selected exhibitions, informative catalogues, and impeccable standards. While larger organizations, swayed by numerous trustees and committees, often water down their decisions, these more privately directed institutions adhere uncompromisingly to their original principles. It is comforting to find them still undiluted by group pressures.

For me, two recently published art catalogues stand out as exemplary; Margaret Scolari Barr's book on Medardo Rosso and H. H. Arnason's study of Jean-Antoine Houdon, the latter prepared for an exhibition at the Worcester

(Continued on page 71)



—Houston Museum of Fine Arts.
Ephebus; school of Polykletus.



—Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Tisch.
One Way, by Richard Lindner.