Compton Communicative Arts Academy Collection

Finding aid created by California State University, Los Angeles staff using RecordEXPRESS
California State University, Los Angeles
5151 State University Drive
Los Angeles, California 90032-8300
http://www.calstatela.edu/library/
2019

Compton Communicative Arts Academy Collection
**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Compton Communicative Arts Academy Collection  
**Dates:** 1968-1985  
**Collection Number:** 2006.001  
**Creator/Collector:** Ford, Willie  
**Extent:** 10.21 linear ft.  
**Repository:** California State University, Los Angeles  
Los Angeles, California 90032-8300  
**Abstract:** The Compton Communicative Arts Academy (CCAA) archive preserves and documents a rare and visual narrative of postwar Black communities continuing efforts of representation in the greater Los Angeles from 1968-1985. The archive's focal point is the Black Arts Movement and the integral role played by the Communicative Arts Academy (CAA).  
**Language of Material:** English  
**Access**  
Access is available by appointment for Cal State LA student and faculty researchers as well as independent researchers.  
**Publication Rights**  
Permission for publication is given on behalf of Special Collections as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained by the researcher.  
**Preferred Citation**  
Compton Communicative Arts Academy Collection. California State University, Los Angeles  
**Biography/Administrative History**  
The Compton Communicative Arts Academy (CCAA) archive preserves and documents a rare and visual narrative of postwar Black communities continuing efforts of representation in the greater Los Angeles from 1968-1985. The archive's focal point is the Black Arts Movement and the integral role played by the Communicative Arts Academy (CAA). CAA originated from the Compton - Willowbrook - Enterprise Community Action Agency (CWECCA) which was established in 1967 by The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to create and fund Community Action Programs (CAP’s) also known as “anti-poverty programs.” CAA offered programming in visual arts (sculpture, photography, and printing), performing arts (theater, dance, and music), and utilitarian arts (textiles, garmentry, bi-lingual expression). CAA saw art as an attainment of functional assets that could be of use for career attainment. Participants received incentive bonus as compensation for their attendance all the while exploring personal efficiency, constructing outlets for creative expression, and collaborating with people who shared similar interest. CAA provided a recording studio, a coffee house, a photo lab etc. This space was available yearly from 10am-10pm. During the inception of OEO programs, Ford was sought out to be the Photography Coordinator of the CAA. Previously, Ford had been a color film processor and chemical mixer at A&G Photo Lab and Hecht Custom Color Lab. Ford was also a Community Coordinator at the University of Southern California (USC) where he was in charge of documenting educator’s experiences and attitudes towards their immediate communities. Over the years Willie Ford’s images resulted in compilations of paintings and murals by prominent Black artists of the time including John Outerbridge and Elliott Pinkney. The images also consist of musical performances by CAA’s band “The Communicative Artists” and theatrical performances by “The Robeson Players.” Further, the photographs capture CAA’s office management by predominantly Black women, Head Start ceremonies, sculpture instruction, dance instruction, band practice, performances, conferences, festivals etc. Finally, the publications demonstrate CAA efforts in disseminating information about their institution. This includes information about their origins, mini biographies of prominent people, and brochures promoting their workshops. The visuals reaffirm that CAA proved to be a vital platform of self-empowerment and self-representation for and by Compton’s Black residents. The archive represents daily communal efforts in creating art centered platforms that encapsulate history, memory, testimony, culture, and political views.  
**Scope and Content of Collection**  
The materials in the Compton Communicative Arts Academy (CCAA) archive were created from 1968-1985 by Communicative Arts Academy’s (CAA) coordinator of photography, Willie Ford. The bulk of this collection contains negatives ranging from 35mm negatives, 35mm negative slides, and 120mm negatives followed by photographs, and publications. The visual narrative contains information on events surrounding the CCA. The collection details a visual historical narrative of the city of Compton through the arts. The collection documents and preserves Black memory, testimony, tradition, and culture in Compton.  
**Indexing Terms**
Compton, CA
Black Arts movement
African American art
Photography—Negatives
Artists and Community--California--Los Angeles
Outterbridge, John
Pinkney, Elliott
Communicative Arts Academy
Negatives
Photographs
Publications

Compton Communicative Arts Academy Finding Aid