Guide to the Bennett Maric Collection

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Guide to the Bennett Maric Collection, ca. 1957-1965

Collection number: Bernath Mss 12

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Bennett Maric Collection,
Date (inclusive): ca. 1957-1965
Collection Number: Bernath Mss 12
Creator: Maric, Bennett
Extent: .4 linear feet (1 document box)
Repository: University of California, Santa Barbara. Library. Department of Special Collections
Santa Barbara, California 93106-9010
Physical Location: Del Sur
Language: English.
Access Restrictions
None.
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Acquisition Information
Donated by Bennett Maric.
Biography
The following is drawn in part from an obituary that appeared in the Santa Barbara News-Press on October 8, 1989. (See also a letter from Maric’s attorney in folder 1/8 of the collection which supplies a number of additional details mainly relating to the legal issues of the theft and recovery of the art works.)
Bennett "Bo" Maric was born on July 22, 1905, in Split, Yugoslavia. He studied at the University of Belgium and then moved to Paris. His lifelong interest in art was fueled by his friendship with the French painter Maurice de Vlaminck. In Paris, he was a news correspondent for a Yugoslav newspaper attached to the Yugoslav embassy when the Germans occupied the city. It was there that he had acquired a valuable art collection. Maric moved to Spain and eventually to Los Angeles in 1948. He became a naturalized US citizen in 1952. He moved to Montecito, California where he lived for 30 years. Bennett Maric died at his home in Montecito on October 6, 1989. He was survived by his wife, Irene; his stepdaughter, Kathleen D. Roche; and two granddaughters, all of Santa Barbara, California.

Scope and Content of Collection
The collection consists of material, primarily correspondence (mostly outgoing) related to Maric’s efforts through international legal action to recover eight paintings stolen from him in Paris during World War II. The paintings were to have been transferred from Paris to Lisbon under the supervision of one Feodor Dobrovic, the Yugoslav chargé d'affaires. Dobrovic later confessed to his role in the theft. Six of the paintings were by Renoir, one was a Pissarro, and one a Corot. In 1957, Maric’s paintings were located and turned over to the Yugoslav government and eventually placed in a public museum in Belgrade for safekeeping. Maric then attempted for several years to have them returned, contacting various officials in the American government and others to request their help. Among those whom he contacted were Eleanor Roosevelt and William Douglas.

In 1961 an agreement was reached with the Yugoslav government. In exchange for the release of four of the Renoirs, Maric agreed that the remaining four paintings would be given to the People's Republic of Yugoslavia. He then spent several years attempting, anonymously via various brokers, to auction or privately sell the recovered four paintings. The correspondence does not make clear if he was ultimately successful in doing so. In addition to the correspondence, there is some research material: notes, extracts from art catalogs, clippings and photographs (or color transparencies), most of which is related to the stolen paintings.

Related Materials

Series 1. Correspondence 1957-1965
Scope and Content Note
Related to Maric’s legal efforts to recover and later to sell his paintings.

Box 1: 1 - 9
Correspondence, 1957 - 1965

Box 1: 10
Notes in preparation for legal activity

Box 1: 11
Copyflow negative from auction catalog

Box 1: 12 - 15
Clippings

Box 1: 16
Color transparencies of the four returned Renoirs

Box 1: 17
Color transparency, Velazquez, "A Young Girl"

Box 1: 18
Photograph of artwork, unknown artist, inscribed (Vlaminck?), 1948

Box 1: 19
Miscellany: Color reproductions of artworks, essay on Renoir by Mary Maric (1966); seems to be material for a “report” by Mary Maric