



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Patrick Kelly archive

1980-1994 [bulk 1985-1989]

Sc MG 631

Summary

Creator: Kelly, Patrick, 1954-1990

Title: Patrick Kelly archive

Date: 1980-1994 [bulk 1985-1989]

Size: 2.75 linear feet (8 boxes, 1 tube)

Source: Gift, Björn G. Amelan, 1997

Abstract: The Patrick Kelly Archive consists of press books, sketches of his designs, clippings, scrapbooks, and some letters. The bulk of the press books and sketches document Kelly's Paris fashion shows from 1985 to 1989. A number of the sketches are accompanied by fabric swatches and annotations for colors and types of fabric to be used. There are numerous clippings about his designs and fashion shows, magazine covers and feature articles advertising his fashions in major American and French fashion magazines. Included in the collection are a scrapbook and documents related to his death, a small amount of correspondence referring to this fashion career, as well as a proposal (1993-1994) prepared by Maya Angelou for a book about Kelly. Other scrapbooks document Kelly's birthday and Christmas parties, and post-fashion show parties. One of the scrapbooks contains photographs of the behind-the-scenes preparations for his March 1989 show and includes color sketches of his designs. There is also a small sampling of the black themed postcards Kelly was known to collect.

Access: Some collections held by the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. To request access to materials in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, please visit: http://archives.nypl.org/divisions/scm/request_access

Preferred citation: [Item], Patrick Kelly archive, Sc MG 631, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Creator History

Born in Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1954, Patrick Kelly's interest in fashion design began in his childhood. He took courses in art history, fashion and black history at both Jackson State University and Parsons School of Design in New York and in 1979 he travelled to Paris for the first time, where he sold his handmade dresses on the streets.

Early in his career in Paris, Kelly worked for major designers like Paco Rabanne and Hubert de Givenchy. In 1985 he showed his first collection, and also began his business partnership with Bjorn Amelan. His celebrity clients, such as Bette Davis, Madonna and Princess Diana, brought his fashions into the spotlight. In 1987 Kelly closed a \$5 million deal with the American apparel company Warnaco, Inc., which backed and distributed his women's ready-to-wear line.

In 1988, Kelly was voted into the *Chambre Syndicale du Prêt à Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode*, the prestigious French organization of fashion designers. He was the first American to be so honored. As only members of this select group may exhibit their fashions at the Louvre, he was the first African American to have been awarded this distinction. At the time Kelly was voted a member, there were only forty-four members, thirty-four of whom were French. He presented two major fashion collections a year, with a third that included his holiday line. He also organized other requisite showings in the United States and Europe, made personal appearances, judged contests and visited retail shops.

Besides selling his fashions at major Parisian stores, in the United States Kelly's apparel was carried by Saks Fifth Avenue and Marshall Fields, among other stores. His designs were sold in nineteen countries worldwide. Always seeking additional outlets and opportunities to expand his market, by 1988 Kelly was working with Vogue Patterns to enable women to make their own clothing based upon his styles. He designed for the *Victoire Boutique* in Paris and as well as for the Italian clothing manufacturer Benetton. Always close to the roots of his family in Mississippi, many of Kelly's fashions showed his grandmother's influence of bows and buttons (enlarged for his designs); these trademarks became staples of French fashion by June 1989. Kelly had plans for a line of sunglasses and jewelry, and was preparing a cookbook with his mother's, grandmother's as well as his own recipes. In addition, having amassed a collection of six thousand black dolls, he planned to open a doll shop.

Kelly's last runway show was spring/summer 1989 held in March of that year. By the time of the autumn/winter 1990 show held in the fall of 1989, he was too ill to participate fully, and succumbed to AIDS on January 1, 1990 at age 35. Kelly's mother, Letha R. Kelly, granted permission for Kelly's partner, Bjorn Amelan, to continue working with the business following Kelly's death.

Scope and Content Note

The Patrick Kelly Archive consists of press books, sketches of his designs, clippings, scrapbooks, and some letters. The bulk of the press books and sketches document Kelly's Paris fashion shows from 1985 to 1989. A number of the sketches are accompanied by fabric swatches and annotations for colors and types of fabric to be used. There are numerous clippings about his designs and fashion shows, magazine covers and feature articles advertising his fashions in major American and French fashion magazines. Included in the collection are a scrapbook and documents related to his death, a small amount of correspondence referring to this fashion career, as well as a proposal (1993-1994) prepared by Maya Angelou for a book about Kelly. Other scrapbooks document Kelly's birthday and Christmas parties, and post-fashion show parties. One of the scrapbooks contains photographs of the behind-the-scenes preparations for his March 1989 show and includes color sketches of his designs. There is also a small sampling of the black themed postcards Kelly was known to collect.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American fashion designers
African Americans -- Clothing
Fashion drawing
Fashion shows -- France -- Paris

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Picture postcards
Scrapbooks
Sketchbooks

Names

Angelou, Maya
Kelly, Patrick, 1954-1990

Container List

Biographical Information

- b. 1 f. 1 Biographical
- b. 1 f. 2-3 Proposal for book about Kelly - Maya Angelou 1993-1994
- b. 1 f. 4 Certificate - City of Beverly Hills 1989

Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 5 General and Fashion 1982 - 1988
- b. 1 f. 6 General and Fashion undated
- b. 1 f. 7 Chicago Apparel Center, Newsclippings Spring 1989
- b. 1 f. 8 DuPont International Fashion Forum, Invitation to Participate 1989
- b. 1 f. 9 Fashion Show Announcements, Patrick Kelly Postcards and Designs 1989
- b. 1 f. 10 Get Well 1989
- b. 1 f. 11 Greeting Cards 1989
- b. 1 f. 12-15 Get Well Cards and Letters 1989
- b. 1 f. 16-17 Get Well Cards 1989
- b. 1 f. 18-19 Funeral - Flower Cards 1990
 - b. 1 f. 20 Eulogy, Condolence Letters 1990
- b. 1 f. 21-23 Memorial Service - Guest Books 1990
- b. 1 f. 24-25 Estate - Björn Amelan 1990
 - b. 1 f. 26 Minority AIDS Service and Education - Proposal to include Kelly 1992-1995

Memorabilia collected by Kelly

- b. 2 f. 1 Cards illustrating shoe designs
- b. 2 f. 2-3 Postcards - Black Themes
 - b. 2 f. 4 Postcards and Memorabilia - Black Themes
 - b. 2 f. 5 Postcards - Non-Black Themes
 - b. 2 f. 6 Reproductions of 1930s - 1940s Photographs - The South
 - b. 2 f. 7 Photographic Reproductions - Josephine Baker
 - b. 2 f. 8 Patrick Kelly Envelopes and Folders - Promotional Materials
 - b. 2 f. 9 Song Lyrics undated
 - b. 2 f. 10 Scrapbook - "Croquis Rehu" (Sketches Received)
 - b. 2 f. 11 Fashion Show - Milan - Printed Drawings Autumn 1984
 - b. 2 f. 12 Fashion Show - Milan - Plaques (2) Autumn 1984
 - b. 2 f. 13 Showroom, Autumn/Winter 1985-1986; Guestbook (March 1985) 1985-1986
 - b. 2 f. 14 Black Fashion Museum Exhibit including designs by Kelly - Announcement and Letter 1992
- b. 2 f. 15-17 Scrapbook with photographs - Parties, etc 1985-1989
 - b. 2 f. 18 Photographs - Envelopes 1-4 1985-1986
 - b. 2 f. 19 Photographs - Envelopes 5-11 1986-1988
 - b. 2 f. 20 Photographs - Envelopes 12-15 1988
 - b. 2 f. 21 Photographs - Envelopes 16-21 1988-1989
 - b. 2 f. 22 Photographs - Envelopes 22-25 1988-1989

Collection Sketches and Press Books

- b. 3 f. 1 Collection Sketches, Rue du Mail, Paris Summer 1986
- b. 3 f. 2 Pressbook Summer 1986
- b. 3 f. 3-4 Pressbook Winter 1986
- b. 3 f. 5-6 Collection Sketches, Gallerie Colbert, Paris
- b. 3 f. 7 Collection Sketches 1986-1987
- b. 3 f. 8 Press/Photobook 1986-1987
- b. 3 f. 9-12 Collection Sketches, Grand Hotel, Paris Summer 1987
- b. 4 f. 1-3 Pressbooks Winter 1987
- b. 4 f. 4 Collection Sketches
- b. 4 f. 5-8 Collection Sketches and Swatches, Intercontinental Hotel, Paris
- b. 4 f. 9 Pressbook
- b. 4 f. 10-11 Collection Press/Photobook, Couture Show
- b. 4 f. 12 Harry Boyd's Sketches, Couture Show
- b. 5 f. 1-3 Collection Sketches and Swatches, Grand Hotel, Paris Summer 1988
- b. 5 f. 4-5 Pressbook
- b. 5 f. 6-8 Press/Photobook Winter 1988
- b. 5 f. 9 Pressbook
- b. 5 f. 10 Winter and Holiday Collection Sketches, La Cigne, Paris - Men's Line Winter 1988
- b. 5 f. 11-13 Winter and Holiday Collection Sketches, La Cigne, Paris - Women's Line Winter 1988
- b. 6 f. 1-3 Holiday Cruise; Galleries Lafayette, Paris, Collection Sketches and Swatches Summer 1989, 1990
- b. 6 f. 4-12 Pressbooks Summer 1989
- b. 6 f. 13-17 Pressbooks Winter 1989
- b. 7 f. 1 News clippings 1980-1983
- b. 7 f. 2 Sketchbook 1985
- b. 7 f. 3 Portfolio 1986
- b. 7 f. 4 Sketchbooks (4)
- b. 7 f. 5 Laura Carlton - Portfolio June-July 1989
- b. 8 f. 1 Sketches
- b. 8 f. 2-3 Sketchbooks
- b. 8 f. 4 Collection Sketchbook
- t. 9 Sketch; 9 button tacks; tiny decorative hearts