Summary

Creator: Kelly, Patrick, 1954-1990

Title: Patrick Kelly archive

Date: 1982-1994 [bulk 1985-1989]

Size: 6 linear feet

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: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Patrick Kelly archive, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Creator History

African-American fashion designer who came to fame in the fashion houses of Paris, Patrick 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 in 1988. He was the first American to be so honored.

Early in his career in Paris, Kelly worked for major designers like Paco Rabanne. In 1985 he showed his
first collection, and also began his business partnership with Bjorn Amelan. Kelly's whimsical and imaginative creations attracted celebrity clients, such as Bette Davis, Grace Jones and Princess Diana and brought his fashions into the spotlight. He designed for Victoire Boutique in Paris and the Italian clothing manufacturer Benetton. His designs were sold in nineteen countries worldwide, and his apparel was carried by major department stores in the United States and in Paris. By 1988 Kelly was working with Vogue Patterns to enable women to make their own clothing based upon his designs. Kelly died of AIDS on January 1, 1990 at age 35.

**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**
- Kelly, Patrick, 1954-1990
- Angelou, Maya