

Pennsylvania Academician records

Collection ID: RG.01.06.01

Finding Aid prepared by Hoang Tran



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY
OF THE FINE ARTS

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
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Summary Information

Repository	The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock Archives
Creator	The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
Title	Pennsylvania Academician records
Date [bulk]	
Date [inclusive]	1812-1897
Extent	3 boxes
Location note	
Language	English
Language of Materials note	English
Abstract	The Pennsylvania Academicians were a group of artists charged with supervising the Academy's Life School and assisting with exhibitions. Collection includes early Academy records such as resolutions, minutes, member lists, certificates, and photo albums.

Preferred Citation note

[identification of item], Title of Collection, Collection ID#, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Art, Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

Historical note

The Pennsylvania Academicians were a group of artists charged with supervising the Academy's Life School and assisting with exhibitions. The original group, elected by the board of directors on 13 March 1812, consisted of

William Rush	Benjamin Latrobe
Thomas Sully	John W. Jarvis
Rembrandt Peale	Maximilian Godefroy
Charles Willson Peale	Gilbert Stuart
Gideon Fairman	Washington Allston
John Eckstein	John J. Vanderlyn
Thomas Birch	Charles King
John Reich	John S. Copley
Dennis Volozan	John Trumbull
Benjamin Trotter (declined)	Robert Mills
Luke Robbins	David Edwin
Benjamin West	

Subsequent members were elected by the Academicians themselves.

According to the regulations outlined by the board of directors, the Academicians were to be painters, sculptors, architects, or engravers of recognized merit. Membership was limited to forty, with the combined number of architects and engravers not exceeding one-quarter of the total. The Academicians were responsible for selecting professors and keepers (or curators) of the Academy. Each was expected to contribute an example of his work to the permanent collection, although there is little evidence that the elected artists observed this rule.

A council of six Academicians was elected annually for the purpose of handling routine business, their expenses paid by the directors. The Council of Academicians was permitted to attend board meetings, although it had no vote on anything other than the awarding of prizes.

In 1831 the Academicians appear to have disbanded. Bylaws relating to the group were amended in 1846, and the Academicians were reorganized. One of the amendments established a new category of membership, the Associates of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (also known as the Associate Artists). This was an honorary position given to practicing painters, sculptors, architects, and engravers over the age of twenty-one, from whom all future Academicians would be selected. The last recorded elections of the Associate Artists and the Pennsylvania Academicians occurred in 1869 and in 1871, respectively.

The Academicians were active in institutional affairs throughout the 1850s and 1860s. After 1871 they ceased to exist as a functioning organization.

Few records remain of the Pennsylvania Academicians and the Associate Artists. Minutes of the board of directors between 1812 and 1871 make note of the nominations and elections. The bylaws of the Pennsylvania Academy outline the membership regulations, purpose, and responsibilities of the two bodies. Annual exhibition catalogues for the years 1862–69, and 1876 (see 2-F) contain rosters of the group's members and indicate who were members of the Council of Academicians.

In 1973 the Pennsylvania Academy mounted an exhibition of work by and portraits of the Academicians. A short history of the group was included with the printed checklist. The Archives has a list of all members of the Pennsylvania Academicians and the Associate Artists.

Scope and Contents note

- Resolutions, 1812
- Minutes, 1861–74 (1897 copy made from a lost original minute book)
- Membership Lists, 1863 (1 volume)
- Membership Certificates, ca. 1850 (oversize)
These certificates carry an image of the Academy's second building on Chestnut Street drawn by James Hamilton and engraved by John Sartain.
- Photograph Albums, ca. 1870 (2 volumes titled "Artists of Philadelphia Photographed by F. D. Richards")

Two nearly identical albums, containing more than forty photographs of the Pennsylvania Academicians and Associate Artists, are preserved. The albums were assembled about 1870, perhaps as commemoratives. Many of the images are apparently by Frederick De Bourg Richards.

Arrangement note

No arrangement.

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access note

Collection is open for research.

The archives reserves the right to restrict access to materials of sensitive nature. Please contact the department for further information.

Conditions Governing Use note

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Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Provenance note

Processing Information note

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Controlled Access Headings

Person(s)

Corporate Name(s)

Genre(s)

Geographic Name(s)

Subject(s)

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note

Collection Inventory

Date	Folder Title	Box #	Folder #
1870	Correspondence	1	1
1812	Resolutions	1	2
1897	Minutes and record book	1	
1863	Membership lists	1	
circa 1870	Photograph album volume 1	2	
circa 1870	Photograph album volume 2	3	
circa 1850	Membership certificate	oversized flat file	