

University of St. Michael's College Archives



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Fr. Dan Donovan Fonds
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Biographical note

Father Daniel Donovan is a Canadian theologian, priest, and contemporary art collector. Born in Toronto in 1937, Father Donovan completed his undergraduate degree at St. Michael's College and later studied theology at Université Laval in Quebec City from 1958 to 1962. As a continuation of his graduate studies, he spent four years in Europe where he acquired a Licentiate in Sacred Theology (SSL) from the Biblical Institute in Rome, and a doctorate degree from the University of Münster in Germany.

Father Donovan returned to Canada in 1967. In 1971, he began teaching in the Faculty of Theology at St. Michael's College. Although retired in 2002, he continues to teach part-time in the university's Christianity and Culture program. In addition to his academic service, Father Donovan has also conducted morning mass at St. Basil's Catholic Parish and assisted as a homilist at Toronto's Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish for over 20 years.

Father Donovan is notably known for the creation of the Donovan Art Collection, a selection of contemporary art that is installed across the St. Michael's College campus. The collection finds its roots in Father Donovan's purchase of two Jakob Steinhardt woodcut prints in 1967, which were initially meant to be souvenirs of his time in Europe. In 1980, Father Donovan purchased a large steel sculpture by artist Kosso Eloul titled 'Zen West'. The subsequent donation of this sculpture to St. Michael's College marked the official start of the Donovan Art Collection, and spurred Father Donovan's further interest in collecting and learning about Canadian contemporary art.

The Donovan Art Collection currently consists of over 400 artworks. It has been featured in various Canadian news publications, as well as on a six-part miniseries aired by OMNI Television in 2006. Additionally, the collection possesses two catalogues - the first published in 2001, and the latter in 2010.

References:

Donovan, Daniel, and Ihor. Holubizky. *Signs of the Spirit : The Donovan Collection at St. Michael's College*. Toronto: University of St. Michael's College, 2001.

Donovan, Daniel. *The Donovan Collection*. Toronto: University of St. Michael's College, 2010.

"The Donovan Collection." John M. Kelly Library, July 23, 2023.
<https://library.stmikes.utoronto.ca/the-donovan-collection/>.

Scope and Content

Dates range: 1980-

Extent: 46.4 cm of textual records. - 2 books. - 1 DVD.

Scope and Content: Fonds consist of records created by Father Donovan throughout the course of his maintenance of the Donovan Art Collection and time as a professor at St. Michael's College. Records include various administrative documents, financial documents, correspondences, research materials, publications, and lists regarding artwork in the collection and their locations on campus.

Note:

Fonds is incomplete as future accruals are expected.

Custodial History:

Records were maintained by Father Donovan before their donation to the archive. First accrual of records occurred in 2019, and second accrual occurred in 2023.

Arrangement:

Fonds arranged into 9 series in consultation with Father Donovan, while also reflecting the received organization of the material.

Access:

6 series with unrestricted, 2 series with restricted access, and 1 series accessible only by request. Please see series level access notes.

Boxes:

7 boxes.

Series 1: Correspondence

Dates range: 1990-2020

Extent: 13.2 cm of textual records

Scope and Content: Series consists of various correspondences received by Father Donovan between 1990 and 2020, largely pertaining to the Donovan Art Collection. Correspondences include cards, printed emails, and notes sent from students, St. Michael's College faculty, collection visitors, artists, curators, and more. Some files include photographs and other printed material sent to Father Donovan as enclosures, as well as texts created by Father Donovan for different art events and lectures. In some instances, a copy of Father Donovan's typed response is also included in the file.

Note:

Most letters are written in English, with a few written in French and German. File titles assigned by archivist to better reflect chronological order of material.

Arrangement:

Archivist has arranged files by year in consultation with Father Donovan, apart from several files that appear to have been organized separately from other correspondences by the creator.

Access:

Unrestricted.

Boxes:

Boxes 1 and 2.

Series 2: Acquisitions and Tax Receipts

Dates range: 1980-2010

Extent: 5.1 cm of textual records

Scope and Content: Series consists of various documents relating to purchased acquisitions for the Donovan Art Collection. Documents include invoices and receipts for artwork purchases, and costs pertaining to the artworks' appraisal, framing, transportation, and installation. Additionally, the series also contains several certificates of authenticity and tax receipts.

Note:

File titles assigned by archivist to better reflect chronological order of material.

Arrangement:

Archivist has arranged files by year in consultation with Father Donovan for improved discoverability.

Access:

Restricted. Access only granted by request.

Boxes:

Box 5.

Series 3: Publications

Dates range: 1990-2010

Extent: 6.3 cm of textual records. - 2 books. - 1 DVD.

Scope and Content: Series consists of various publications about Father Donovan, the Donovan Art Collection, and artists included in the collection. Publications include articles, reviews, exhibition catalogues, promotional materials, and full-length issues of magazines and newspapers. The series additionally includes two published catalogue books of the Donovan Art Collection, along with a DVD of the OMNI Television show about the collection. Although the series contains mostly original copies of different publications, the series also demonstrates Father Donovan's personal practice of cutting, arranging, and gluing various article texts onto blank paper for safe-keeping.

Notes:

File titles transcribed directly from folders, as labelled by Father Donovan.

Arrangement:

Series maintains original arrangement of materials as received by Father Donovan.

Access:

Unrestricted.

Boxes:

Boxes 1, 2, and 7.

Series 4: Art Collection Lists

Dates range: 1998-2023

Extent: 2.9 cm of textual records

Scope and Content: Series consists of typed and handwritten lists outlining various visitors to the Donovan Art Collection throughout the years, as well as an inventory of the Donovan Art Collection and the location of artworks on the St. Michael's College campus.

Notes:

Majority of file titles transcribed directly from folders as labelled by Father Donovan. Please see file level notes for more information.

Arrangement:

This series has been arranged by the archivist into two sub-series for improved discoverability:

1. Artwork Lists
2. Visitor Lists

Access:

Unrestricted.

Boxes:

Box 2 and 7.

Sub-series 4.1: Artwork Lists

Dates range: 2009-2023

Extent: 2.3 cm of textual records

Scope and Content: Sub-series consists of inventory lists of the Donovan Art Collection, which also include the locations of artwork on the St. Michael's College campus.

Notes:

Most items in sub-series are undated.

Boxes:

Box 7.

Sub-series 4.2: Visitor Lists

Date range: 1998-2023

Extent: 0.6 cm of textual records

Scope and Content: Sub-series consists of Father Donovan's handwritten lists recording the names and dates of various visitors to the Donovan Art Collection. One of the files also includes a list of artist names whose works appears in the collection.

Boxes:

Box 2 and 7.

Series 5: Financial Accounts

Dates range: 2004-2023

Extent: 11.7 cm of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of invoices and receipts regarding financial donations, art purchases, and other expenses of the Donovan Art Collection, as well as correspondences between Father Donovan and the art collection accounting team. Other documents within the series include opening and closing balances for both the Donovan Art Collection account and Endowment Fund account.

Notes:

Original file titles altered by archivist to better reflect chronological order of material.

Arrangement:

This series has been arranged chronologically by year into two sub-series for improved discoverability of financial documents. Sub-series consist of:

1. Donovan Art Collection Account
2. Endowment Fund

Access:

Restricted.

Boxes:

Boxes 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Sub-Series 5.1: Donovan Art Collection Account

Date range: 2004-2023

Extent: 9.8 cm of textual records

Scope and Content: Sub-series consists of documents relating to the Donovan Art Collection financial account. Documents include invoices and receipts regarding financial donations, art purchases, and other expenses of the Donovan Art Collection, as well as the account's closing and opening balances. Additionally, the sub-series also includes related correspondences between Father Donovan and the collection accounting team.

Notes:

Original file titles altered by archivist to better reflect chronological order of material. However, file titles retain information about how Father Donovan grouped his financial records together, which can be seen through the 'Account' number associated with each file title.

Boxes:

Boxes 4, 5, and 6.

Sub-Series 5.2: Endowment Fund

Date range: 2008-2023

Extent: 1.9 cm of textual records

Scope and Content: Sub-series consists of documents relating to the Donovan Art Collection Endowment Fund. Documents include receipts of financial donations to the fund, the account's closing and opening balances, as well as correspondences between Father Donovan and St. Michael's College accounting teams.

Boxes:

Boxes 6 and 7.

Series 6: Art Loans

Date range: 1987-2023

Extent: 4.4 cm of textual records

Scope and Content:

Series consists of documents relating to art loans of the Donovan Art Collection, including loan agreements, receipts, shipment notices, invoices, and more. Many loan agreements also include related correspondence from artwork borrowers.

Notes:

Please see file level notes for information about file title assignments.

Arrangement:

Series maintains original chronological arrangement of materials as received by Father Donovan.

Access:

Unrestricted.

Boxes:

Box 3.

Series 7: Catalogue Planning Material

Date range: 2001-2010

Extent: 2.0 cm of textual records

Scope and Content: Series consists of documents and correspondences related to the publication of the 2010 Donovan Art Collection catalogue. Documents include rough copies of catalogue essays, correspondences between Father Donovan and catalogue editors, and shipping addresses of artists. Additionally, the series also includes several invoices and receipts for costs of the book launch, copyright, and printing.

The 2010 catalogue is the most recent printed overview of the Donovan Art Collection. Father Donovan's essays describe the collection's beginnings, as well as the artworks' engagement with the St. Michael's College community.

Notes:

File titles transcribed directly from folders, as labelled by Father Donovan.

Arrangement:

Series maintains original arrangement of materials as received by Father Donovan.

Access:

Unrestricted.

Boxes:

Box 3.

Series 8: Stewardship Reports

Date range: 2018-2020

Extent: 0.5 cm of textual records

Scope and Content: Series consists of stewardship reports sent to Father Donovan from St. Michael's College. These reports outline Father Donovan's financial and artwork contributions to the St. Michael's College community, extending as far back as 1981.

Notes:

File titles assigned by archivist.

Arrangement:

Series maintains original arrangement of materials as received by Father Donovan.

Access:

Restricted.

Boxes:

Box 6.

Series 9: Artist Reference Files

Date range: 2018

Extent: 0.3cm of textual records

Scope and Content: Series consists of collected texts pertaining to artists within the Donovan Art Collection. Texts include articles, CVs, interviews, and exhibition catalogues. Currently, the series only consists of artist Meryl McMaster's reference file. Additional artist files may be added in the future.

Notes:

File titles transcribed directly from folders, as labelled by Father Donovan.

Arrangement:

Series maintains original arrangement of materials as received by Father Donovan.

Access:

Unrestricted.

Boxes:

Box 7.

Appendix: File Level Descriptions

Series 1: Correspondence

File Number	File title	Date range
DAC1.2	Art Correspondence 1990-1996	1990-1996
DAC1.3	Art Correspondence 1997	1997
DAC1.4	Art Correspondence 1998	1998
DAC1.5	Art Correspondence 1999	1999
DAC1.6	Art Correspondence 2000	2000
DAC1.7	Art Correspondence 2001	2001
DAC1.8	Art Correspondence 2002	2002
DAC1.9	Art Correspondence 2003	2003
DAC1.10	Art Correspondence 2004	2003-2004
DAC1.11	Art Correspondence 2005	2005
DAC1.12	Art Correspondence 2006	2006
DAC1.13	Art Correspondence 2007	2007
DAC1.14	Art Correspondence 2008	2008
DAC1.15	Art Correspondence 2009	2009
DAC1.16	Art Correspondence 2010	2010
DAC1.17	Art Correspondence	2010-2020
DAC1.18	Correspondence	2001-2017

Series 2: Acquisitions and Tax Receipts

File Number	File title	Date range
DAC1.33	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1980-1982	1980-1982
DAC1.34	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1984	1984
DAC1.35	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1985	1985
DAC1.36	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1986	1986
DAC1.37	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1988	1988
DAC1.38	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1989	1989
DAC1.39	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1990	1990
DAC1.40	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1991	1991
DAC1.41	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1992	1992
DAC1.42	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1993	1993
DAC1.43	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1994	1994
DAC1.44	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1995	1995
DAC1.45	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1996	1996

File Number	File title	Date range
DAC1.46	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1997	1997
DAC1.47	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1998	1998
DAC1.48	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 1999	1999
DAC1.49	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2000	2000
DAC1.50	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2001	2001
DAC1.51	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2002	2002
DAC1.52	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2003	2003
DAC1.53	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2004	2004
DAC1.54	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2005	2005
DAC1.55	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2006	2006
DAC1.56	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2007	2004-2007
DAC1.57	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2008	2008
DAC1.58	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2009	2009
DAC1.59	Acquisitions and Tax Receipts 2010	2010

Series 3: Publications

File Number	File title	Date range
DAC1.1	Articles, etc.	1994-2005
DAC1.20	Article Art Collection	1994-2006
DAC1.21	Article Art Collection	1990-2010
DAC1.86	Art Collection - Articles etc	1994-1999
DAC1.89	Catalogues and DVD	2001-2010

Series 4: Art Collection Lists

File Number	Subseries	File title	Date range
DAC1.19	Visitor Lists	Art Collection Visitors	1998-2022
DAC1.87	Visitor Lists	Art Collection Visitors	2023
DAC1.88	Artwork Lists	Art Lists	2009-2023

Series 5: Financial Accounts

File Number	Subseries	File title	Date range
DAC1.25	Donovan Art	Donovan Collection 2004 Account 1	2004

File Number	Subseries	File title	Date range
	Collection Account		
DAC1.26	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2005 Account 1	2005
DAC1.27	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2006 Account 1	2006
DAC1.28	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2007 Account 1	2007
DAC1.29	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2008 Account 2	2002-2009
DAC1.30	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2009 Account 2	2009
DAC1.31	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2010 Account 3	2010-2012
DAC1.32	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2011 Account 3	2011
DAC1.60	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2012 Account 4	2012
DAC1.61	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2013 Account 4	2013
DAC1.62	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2014 Account 4	2014
DAC1.63	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2015 Account 5	2015
DAC1.64	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2016 Account 5	2016
DAC1.65	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2018 Account 5	2018
DAC1.66	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2019 Account 5	2018-2019
DAC1.67	Donovan Art Collection Account	Donovan Collection 2020 Account 6	2020-2023
DAC1.69	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2008	2008
DAC1.70	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2009	2009
DAC1.71	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2010	2010
DAC1.72	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2011	2011
DAC1.73	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2012	2012
DAC1.74	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2013	2013
DAC1.75	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2014	2014
DAC1.76	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2015	2015
DAC1.77	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2016	2016
DAC1.78	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2017	2017
DAC1.79	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2018	2018
DAC1.80	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2019	2019

File Number	Subseries	File title	Date range
DAC1.81	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2020	2020
DAC1.82	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2021	2021
DAC1.83	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2022	2022
DAC1.84	Endowment Fund	Art Collection Endowment 2023	2023

Series 6: Art Loans

File Number	File title	Date range
DAC1.22	Art Loans	1987-2011
DAC1.23	Art Loans II 2013-2023	2009-2023

Series 7: Catalogue Planning Material

File Number	File title	Date range
DAC1.24	Catalogue 2009-2010	2001-2010

Series 8: Stewardship Reports

File Number	File title	Date range
DAC1.68	Stewardship Reports	2018-2020

Series 9: Artist Reference Files

File Number	File title	Date range
DAC1.85	Meryl McMaster	2018