

Paul Nelson architectural records and papers 7203000

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library

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Summary Information

Repository: Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library

Creator: Nelson, Paul, 1895-1979

Creator: Drexler, Arthur

Creator: Fuller, R. Buckminster (Richard Buckminster), 1895-1983

Creator: Jourdain, Frantz, 1847-1935

Creator: Malraux, André, 1901-1976

Creator: Miró, Joan, 1893-1983

Creator: Nitzchke, Oscar, 1900-

Creator: José Luis Sert, 1902-1983

Creator: Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts

Creator: Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)

Creator: Ecole d'art et d'architecture (Université d'Aix-Marseille Luminy)

Title: Paul Nelson architectural records and papers

ID: 7203000

Date [inclusive]: 1924-1976

Physical 2 manuscript boxes

Description:

Physical 2 bound volumes

Description:

Physical 58 photographs 58 photographs

Description:

Physical 241 drawings 241 drawings

Description:

Language of the English, French.

Material:

Abstract: Paul Nelson was an American architect educated at the Ecole

des Beaux-Arts in Paris and practicing in France and the United States. This collection contains materials related to Nelson's personal, professional, and academic lives, the bulk originating

during his residency in the France, beginning in the 1920s.

Preferred Citation

Paul Nelson architectural records and papers. Located in the Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.

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History

An American-French architect educated at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Paul Nelson contributed significantly to the theoretical and pragmatic dialog between American and French architecture in the mid-twentieth century, designing a range of building types, both built and unbuilt. His most famous work, the much-studied Maison Suspendue, remains a landmark of elegant modernism married to prefabricated technology. This small collection documents Nelson's career and professional interests through papers, photographs, architectural drawings, writings, and published materials.

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History

Paul Nelson was born in Chicago in 1895 and after a brief stint at Princeton University in 1914 and service in the United States Air Force in World War I, he moved to Paris in 1920 to begin a rigorous study of architecture at the highly-regarded Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Nelson entered the atelier of Emmanuel Pontrémoli and moved to the atelier of August Perret in 1925, becoming the first graduate of Perret's studio in 1927. In this heady environment, Nelson was introduced to the fluid vocabularies of Art Deco, Classicism, and Constructivism. Nelson, in particular, recognized the life-long influence of Le Corbusier's writings and architecture in his own work.

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History

Nelson opened his professional practice in Paris in the late 1920s and practiced primarily in France for the remainder of his career. Among Nelson's earliest commissions was a residence in Paris for Alden Brooks, the American author, in which he employed a rigorous geometry on

the exterior façade, while the rear of the house was a transparent skin of glass, looking out on a small garden.

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History

Influenced by the International Style and emerging structural technologies, Nelson's work became more experimental and cerebral over time, reaching its apogee in his most recognized design, the Maison Suspendue, in which interchangeable prefabricated units were literally hung within a structural metal armature, allowing for endless freedom and adaptation to modern living. This unbuilt project was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and established Nelson as a major figure in the European architectural scene.

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History

Ever interested in the cross-pollenization of American and French architecture, Nelson also maintained close ties to the American engineer, inventor, and polymath R. Buckminster Fuller. During a lengthy return to the United States in 1927, Fuller began a correspondence with Nelson that would grow into a long and rich collegial relationship. Indeed, Nelson served as the official representative in France to promote Fuller's 4D House project, which later evolved into the Dymaxion House. As well, Nelson expanded Fuller's knowledge of current French architecture, especially that of Le Corbusier and Perret. In return, Nelson was introduced to the use and properties of metal in architecture, which he found especially appealing in such later projects as the Maison Suspendue.

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History

Exploring the modern movement's affinity for using technology to improve quality of life, Nelson returned again and again to prototyping medical and health care facilities, largely in France. Among his major projects were the Franco-American Memorial Hospital in Saint-Lô (1946-1954), additions to the American Hospital in Neuilly (1951), and the joint design of a "compact" hospital in Dinan, France (1963-1968) and a large hospital near Arles (1965-1974).

Numerous competition and unrealized clinic and hospital projects also show Nelson searching for the balance between functionalism and aesthetics.

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History

During an extended sojourn in the United States between 1957 and 1960, Nelson received a number of prestigious appointments, serving most notably as a visiting professor at Pratt, Yale, Harvard, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as technical advisor to the U.S. Public Health Service, as a Fellow of the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and as a researcher for the Joint Center for Urban Studies at Harvard and MIT. Returning to France, Nelson continued his academic career as professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and then at the Ecole d'Art et d'Architecture at Luminy, Marseille.

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History

Nelson also nurtured close relationships with major writers, artists, and film figures, including Georges Braque, André Derain, Alexander Calder, Joan Miró and Pablo Picasso. In 1930, Nelson designed the luxurious International Style set for Gloria Swanson's film What a Widow! Among his later commissions was a house for Ferdinand Léger's daughter and a museum for Léger's paintings, both unbuilt. Nelson died in Marseille in 1979.

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Scope and Content

This collection contains materials related to Nelson's personal, professional, and academic lives, the bulk originating during his residency in the France, beginning in the 1920s.

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Arrangement

This material is arranged in four series: Project Records, Professional Papers, Faculty Papers, Personal Papers, and Student Work. The arrangement of materials within each series is described at the beginning of each series inventory.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library

Revision Description

File created. EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2009-06-25 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Accession number--1989.012.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Brad Walter, Mellon Graduate Intern, and Annemarie van Roessel, Archivist, Dept. of Drawings & Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, in 2009.

Custodial History

1989.012

Controlled Access Headings

- Architects -- France -- 20th century
- Architecture -- Study and teaching
- International style (Architecture)
- Architecture -- United States -- History -- 20th century
- Hospital architecture -- Egypt
- Hospital architecture -- France
- Hospital buildings -- Design and construction -- France -- History
- Motion pictures -- Setting and scenery
- Correspondence
- typescripts
- Carbon typescript papers
- Holograph papers
- Printing paper
- Photographic prints
- Film negatives
- Photographic transparencies
- Architectural reprographic prints
- Mixed media works
- Architects
- Le Carré bleu
- Calder, Alexander, 1898-1976
- Nelson, Paul, 1895-1979
- Le Corbusier, 1887-1965
- École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts (France)

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Collection Inventory

0.1 1. D		
Subseries 1: Drawings		
Title/Description	Instances	
4D Time Lock, 1928	drawer 295	folder 01
Scope and Contents		
Creator: R. Buckminster Fuller		
Scope and Contents		
4 drawings.		
4D Tower, 1928, undated	drawer 295	folder 02a
Scope and Contents		to 02c
Creator: R. Buckminster Fuller		
Scope and Contents		
14 drawings.		
Brooks, Alden, Maison (80 Boulevard Arago, Paris, France), 1928	drawer 295	folder 03
Scope and Contents		
1 drawing.		
Brooks, Alden, Maison (80 Boulevard Arago, Paris, France), 1929 Apr-1929 May, undated	drawer 295	folder 04
Scope and Contents		
34 drawings		
Kennedy, Joseph P., Sr., Residence, Cinema (Bronxville, NY), circa 1930	drawer 295	folder 05
Scope and Contents		
7 drawings.		
Léger, Nadia, Maison (Gif-sur-Yvette, France), 1956 Jan-1956 Jun, undated	drawer 295	folder 06

10 drawings.

Léger, Nadia, Maison (Gif-sur-Yvette, France), 1956 Feb-1956 Jun, undated	drawer 295	folder 07	
Scope and Contents			
13 drawings.			
Maison de Santé, type minimum., 1932 Jan	drawer 295	folder 08	
Scope and Contents			
4 drawings.			
Maison des Docteurs., 1933 Feb 13, undated	drawer 295	folder 09	
Scope and Contents			
20 drawings.			
Maison Suspendue., circa 1936-1938	drawer 295	folder 10	
Scope and Contents			
69 drawings.			
Musée Léger (Biot, France), 1956 Apr 04, undated	drawer 295	folder 11	
Scope and Contents			
5 drawings.			
Unité de Voisinage (Martigues, France), 1974 Apr 30	drawer 295	folder 12	
Scope and Contents			
4 drawings.			
Vannier, Pierre, Dr., Maison, Details (France?), 1937, undated	drawer 295	folder 13	
Scope and Contents			
21 drawings.			
"What a Widow!," set designs., 1930	drawer 295	folder 14	
Scope and Contents			
3 drawings.			

1 drawing.

Subseries 2: Files		
itle/Description	Instances	
Centre de Santé (Arles, France), 1971-1974	box 01	folder 01
Scope and Contents		
Newspaper articles in French.		
Fuller, R. Buckminster. 4D Project., 1928 May 21	box 01	folder 02
Scope and Contents		
Description. Bound copy.		
Fuller, R. Buckminster. 4D Project., 1928 Aug 17	box 01	folder 03
Scope and Contents		
Description.		
Fuller, R. Buckminster. 4D Project., 1928 Aug	box 01	folder 04
Scope and Contents		
Agreement between Fuller and Nelson.		
Fuller, R. Buckminster. 4D Project., undated	box 01	folder 05
Scope and Contents		
Correspondence from Fuller to Nelson.		
Fuller, R. Buckminster. 4D Project., undated	box 01	folder 06
Scope and Contents		
Description, in French.		
Fuller, R. Buckminster. 4D Project., undated	box 01	folder 07
Scope and Contents		
Description draft, in English, with sketches on verso.		
Fuller, R. Buckminster. 4D Project., undated	box 01	folder 08
Scope and Contents		
Patent papers, including description and drawings.		
Fuller, R. Buckminster., 1944 Feb-1944 Mar	box 01	folder 09

Speech transcript, correspondence, and list of names.

Fuller, R. Buckminster., undated	box 01	folder 10	
Scope and Contents			
Confidentiality agreement, blank.			
Hôpital Américain (Paris, France), 1952 Apr	box 01	folder 11	
Scope and Contents			
"Hôpital Américain de Paris," L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui.			
Hôpital Mémorial France-Etats-Unis (StLô, France), 1943 Jul	box 01	folder 12	
Scope and Contents			
"Suns for Surgery in StLo," Life Magazine.			
Hôpital Mémorial France-Etats-Unis (StLô, France), 1949 Mar	box 01	folder 13	
Scope and Contents			
Penrose, Roland. "Hospital at StLo, France," Architectural Preview, vol. 105, no. 627.			
Hôpital Mémorial France-Etats-Unis (StLô, France), 1959 Jun 16	box 01	folder 14	
Scope and Contents			
Nelson, Paul. "From an Integrated Approach to Design: A 'Hospital for Life'," Hospitals, J.A.H.A. vol 33.			
Hôpital Mémorial France-Etats-Unis (StLô, France), undated	box 01	folder 15	
Scope and Contents			
Bridgeman, Dr. "Hôpital Mémorial France-Etats-Unis, St-Lo, France," L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui no. 70. Also includes English translation.			
Hôpital Mémorial France-Etats-Unis (StLô, France), undated	box 01	folder 16	

Nelson, Paul. "Sala de Operaciones Ovoide." Instituto Tecnico de la Construction y del Cemento.

Hôpital Mémorial France-Etats-Unis (StLô, France), undated	box 01	folder 17	
Scope and Contents			
"Un modernissino complesso ospedaliero: l'Ospedale Francia-Stati Uniti a Saint Lô. Illustrazione Medica.			
Hôpital Hospice (Dinan, France), 1965 Feb	box 01	folder 18	
Scope and Contents			
"DinanHôpital Hospice," Techniques et Architecture series 25, no. 2.			
Hôpital Hospice (Dinan, France), 1965 May	box 01	folder 19	
Scope and Contents			
Nelson, Paul. "Réalisations Passées, Présentes et Futures: Projet d'Hôpital à Dinan," Ordre des Architectes no. 204.			
Hôpital Hospice (Dinan, France), 1970 Apr 22	box 01	folder 20	
Scope and Contents			
"Nouvel Hôpital de Dinan." Report by Centre International d'Etudes Techniques.			
Hôpital Hospice (Dinan, France), undated	box 01	folder 21	
Scope and Contents			
"Projet pour l'Hôpital de Dinan," L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui no. 115.			
Palais de la Découverte, 1937	box 01	folder 22	
Scope and Contents			
Nelson, Paul. "Projet d'un Palais de la Découverte," Cahiers d'Art. Co-architects: Paul Nelson, Oscar Nitzschké, Frantz Jourdain.			
Palais de la Découverte, 1938 Mar 14	box 01	folder 23	

Nelson, Paul. "Projet d'un Palais de la Découverte: Analyse du Problème." Co-architects: Paul Nelson, Oscar Nitzschké, Frantz Jourdain.

le/Description	Instances	
Kennedy, Joseph, Residence, cinema (Bronxville, NY), circa 1930	box 01	folder 24
Scope and Contents		
3 items : Model views.		
Kennedy, Joseph, Residence, cinema (Bronxville, NY), circa 1930	box 01	folder 25
Scope and Contents		
10 items : Drawings.		
Hôpital Mémorial France-Etats-Unis (StLô, France), undated	box 01	folder 26
Scope and Contents		
14 items : Drawings.		
Hospital project (Ismailai, Egypt), undated	box 01	folder 27
Scope and Contents		
1 item : Model view.		
Hospital project (Arles, France), undated	box 01	folder 28
Scope and Contents		
2 items : Model views.		
Unité de Voisinage (Martigues, France), 1974 Apr 30	box 01	folder 29
Scope and Contents		

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Series II: Professional Papers Title/Description Instances "A La Recherche de L'Hôpital du XXe Siècle," Revue Equipements et Techniques du Confort no. 32, 1965 Nov

Interview with Paul Nelson.

American Institute of Architects, Vital Questions, 1968	box 01	folder 31
Scope and Contents		
Newsletter.		
Architecture Hospitalière, Deux Etudes, Paul Nelson: Maison de Santé, Pavillon de Chirurgie, 1936	container 4- Flap	
Scope and Contents		
Wire-bound.		
Assorted newspaper clippings, 1963-1964	box 01	folder 32
Scope and Contents		
In French.		
Calder, Alexander - Correspondence, 1965 Sep 22	box 01	folder 33
Scope and Contents		
In French. Also includes personal comments.		
Le Carré Bleu, 1961-1969	box 01	folder 34
Scope and Contents		
Multiple editions.		
Claudius-Petit, Eugène - Correspondence, 1969	box 01	folder 35
Drexler, Arthur - Correspondence, 1959-1974	box 01	folder 36
Exposition des Techniques Americaines, 1946	container 4-	
Scope and Contents	Flap	
Bound scrapbook with black-and-white photographic prints.		
Galpérine, Charles, "Un American à Paris," Notre Republique no. 250, 1967 Feb 03	box 02	folder 1
Scope and Contents		
Interview with Paul Nelson.		
Graham Foundation., 1957 Jan 02	box 02	folder 2

Interview with Paul Nelson for "Quatre Soli." Transcript of group discussion regarding research project proposed by Nelson In French

Graham Foundation, 1957	box 02	folder 3
Scope and Contents		
Fellows information.		
Graham Foundation, correspondence to and from, 1957-1958	box 02	folder 4
Graham Foundation, 1958 Apr 22	box 02	folder 5
Scope and Contents		
Project report written by Nelson.		
Graham Foundation, 1958	box 02	folder 6
Scope and Contents		
Fellows information.		
Les Informations Dieppoises, 1964-1965	box 02	folder 7
Scope and Contents		
Newspaper clippings.		
Le Corbusier - Correspondence, 1948 Mar 25	box 02	folder 8
"Liason des Arts," exhibition, 1961 Jul 31	box 02	folder 9
Scope and Contents		
Correspondence and description.		
Miró, Joan - Correspondence, 1966 Nov 25	box 02	folder 10
Nelson, Paul. "L'Air Conditionné: Sa valeur thérapeutique, ses conséquences sur l'architecture hospitalière", 1934	box 02	folder 11
Nelson, Paul. "L'Homme, L'Architecte et L'Industrie du Bâtiment." From unidentified magazine, circa 1950s	box 02	folder 12
Nelson, Paul. "Introduction à la Conférence à Vancouver", 1975 Dec 14	box 02	folder 13
Scope and Contents		
Typewritten manuscript.		
Nelson, Paul. "Modern Architecture is Based on Current Life: Great Building Art Product of Necessity." Chicago Evening Post Magazine of the Art World, 1928 Apr 17	box 02	folder 14

Newspaper clipping.

Nelson, Paul. "My Approach to Architecture", 1941 Apr 22	box 02	folder 15	
Scope and Contents			
Lecture given at Yale University. Typewritten.			
Nelson, Paul, "New O.R. Design Concepts." Hospital Topics Magazine, 1959 Feb	box 02	folder 16	
Nelson, Paul. "Researching for a New Standard of Living." Printed by Revere Copper and Brass, circa 1940s	box 02	folder 17	
Scope and Contents			
Pamphlet.			
Nelson, Paul. "Les Tables Rondes du Second Oeuvre: Plomberie et Sanitaire Industrialisés." Chaud-Froid Plomberie no. 226, 1965 Oct	box 02	folder 18	
Nelson, Paul. "Urbanisme et Enfance." Pédiatrie Sociale, undated	box 02	folder 19	
Nelson, Paul. "Vers le Centre de Santé." La Table Ronde no. 242, 1968 Mar	box 02	folder 20	
Scope and Contents			
Pamphlet.			
Nelson, Paul. "Vers un Nouvel Humanisme." L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, 1957 Jan	box 02	folder 21	
Perspecta, 1971	box 02	folder 22	
Scope and Contents			
Correspondence with Robert L. Geddes, Graham T. Johnston, and Henry Wollman regarding contributions to Perspecta.			
Royaumont conference. "Liaison des Arts", 1965 Nov 11	box 02	folder 23	
Scope and Contents			
Schedule and list of participants.			
Royaumont conference. Nelson, Paul, "Le Théatre et les Loisirs", 1961 Jun	box 02	folder 24	
Royaumont conference. Nelson, Paul, "Vers une méthode pour l'intégration des Arts", 1962 Oct	box 02	folder 25	
Rosenfield, Isadore. Correspondence, 1971 Nov	box 02	folder 26	
Sert, José. Correspondence, 1971 Nov	box 02	folder 27	

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subseries III: Faculty Papers		
Title/Description	Instances	
Atelier Franco-Americain, 1961-1966	box 02	folder 28
Scope and Contents		
Proposals and correspondence. In French.		
Ecole d'Art et d'Architecture à Marseille-Luminy. Enseignement Divers, 1958-1974	box 02	folder 29
Scope and Contents		
Design course proposals. In French.		
Ecole d'Art et d'Architecture à Marseille-Luminy. General materials, 1967 Apr 06	box 02	folder 30
Scope and Contents		
Press release; clippings from Le Figaro.		
Ecole d'Art et d'Architecture à Marseille-Luminy. Théories Enseignement, Architecture et Urbanisme, 1968-1972	box 02	folder 31
Scope and Contents		
Correspondence to and from André Malraux and administrative and course development papers. In French.		
Ecole d'Art et d'Architecture à Marseille-Luminy. Objectifs et Programmes d'EnseignementArchitecture Hospitalière, 1974-1976	box 02	folder 32
Scope and Contents		
Hospital design course descriptions. In French.		
Pratt Institute, Jersey Meadows studio, 1958	box 02	folder 33
Scope and Contents		
Notes, administrative papers, maps, published materials, photographic negative		
Pratt Institute, Jersey Meadows studio, 1958-1959	box 02	folder 34
Scope and Contents		
Administrative papers and published materials.		
Pratt Institute, Jersey Meadows studio, circa 1958	box 02	folder 35

Student project photographs. Black and white photographic prints.

Centre Homéopathique, undated

box 02

Scope and Contents

18: Black-and-white photographic prints.

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Title/Description	Instances
Exposition d'Art Français, circa 1920s	drawer 295
Scope and Contents	
2 items : Graphite, ink, and wash on paper.	
Spanish Colonial-style Beaux-Arts club, circa 1920s	roll
Scope and Contents	A132A.13
3 items : Graphite on paper.	
Spanish Colonial-style Beaux-Arts club, circa 1920s	roll
Scope and Contents	A132A.14
1 item : Graphite on paper.	
Un Etablissement de Bains Froids, [1924-1925]	drawer 295
Scope and Contents	
1 item: Ink and gouache on paper, mounted on heavy paper.	
Un Etablissement de Bains Froids, 1924-1925	box 02
Scope and Contents	
2 items : Printed paper.	
Une Cuisine-Restaurant Populaire, 1924-1925	box 02
Scope and Contents	
2 items : Printed paper.	
Unidentified project [sporting complex?], circa 1920s	roll A132A.11

1 item : Graphite on paper.

Unidentified project [sporting complex?], circa 1920s

roll

Scope and Contents

1 item : Graphite on paper.

A132A.12

Unidentified project, elevation, 1924

box 02

Scope and Contents

1 item: Black-and-white photographic print.

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Series V: Personal Papers			
Title/Description	Instances		
Oeuvres d'Art, Correspondances Artistes et Galleries, 1960-1973	box 02	folder 40	

Scope and Contents

Correspondence with Guggenheim Museum and others regarding Alexander Calder sculpture.

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