Abstract: The Allan Rohan Crite Research Guide lists and briefly describes all of the works by and about Crite at Virginia Theological Seminary, including artworks displayed on campus and artworks and printed works in the Bishop Payne Library. The guide includes the entirety of the Allan Rohan Crite Collection (RG A24) in the African American Episcopal Historical Collection. If an item listed on this guide is a part of RG A24, this will be indicated either in the item’s citation or location. This guide is, in effect, considered the finding aid for RG A24, the Allan Rohan Crite Collection.

In his oil paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints, Allan Rohan Crite (1910-2007) recorded the people, architecture, and daily life of African-Americans in Boston’s South End/Roxbury neighborhoods in the 1930s and 1940s. A lifelong member of the Episcopal Church, he was also renowned for his liturgical art that dealt with a variety of religious themes. Some reviewers add a third category for Crite’s work depicting Negro spirituals. During the 1930s, Crite worked under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration and, in the early 1940s, began a 30-year career as a technical illustrator for the Department of the Navy.

In May 2004, the Virginia Theological Seminary awarded Crite the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa.


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**Preferred Citation of Items from RG A24 in the African American Episcopal Historical Collection:** Allan Rohan Crite Collection, African American Episcopal Historical Collection, RG A24, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Box X, Folder X

**Biographical History:**
Allan Rohan Crite was born on March 20, 1910 in Plainfield, New Jersey. When he was still an infant, he moved with his parents, Oscar William and Annamae Palmer Crite to Boston, Massachusetts. As a child he was strongly encouraged by his mother to study the arts and expand his talents. He studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Massachusetts School of Art, and Boston University before graduating from Harvard University with a Bachelor of Arts in 1968. Later in his life, Crite was awarded honorary doctorates from Suffolk University and Emmanuel College for his contributions as an artist and historian. Additionally, he was awarded honorary doctorates by General Theological Seminary in 1994, and by Virginia Theological Seminary in 2004.

Crite has spent his entire career in Boston, working with agencies such as Works Progress Administration and with the Department of the Navy as a technical illustrator. He is a renowned artist, famous for his documenting of African-Americans through scenes of everyday life in his “neighborhood paintings,” his illustrations of Negro spirituals, and his images of religious themes. As a lifelong member and lay leader in the Episcopal Church, Crite is especially recognized for his liturgical art and writings, having published several texts in conjunction with the church. In addition to showcasing his works at the Crite House-Museum, which also serves as his studio and home, Crite’s work can be found on display at museums such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Corcoran Gallery, the National Cathedral, the Smithsonian Institution, the Art Institute of Chicago, Boston’s Athenaeum, the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists and the Museum of Fine Arts. Also, his work was recently showcased at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, Washington in the exhibition, “Allan Rohan Crite: Artist-Reporter of the African American Community,” in 2001.

Allan Rohan Crite died September 6, 2007, at home in Boston, Massachusetts, and his funeral was held at Boston’s Trinity Episcopal Church, Copley Square.

**Acquisition Information for Items in RG A24:**
Linda Chisholm, an associate of Allan Rohan Crite is the collection’s initial donor. Over the years of their friendship, Crite gave Chisholm many pieces and in 2006, she made her first donation to the African American Episcopal Historical Collection—Crite’s self-portrait. Several other pieces, including prints and ink drawings, were given to the AAEHC by Chisholm in subsequent years. The self-portrait of Crite is done in pen & ink and watercolor. The setting of the painting is the South End of Boston. It depicts Crite holding a black and white drawing of a young African American woman holding a baby while a young African American woman in a yellow dress, who looks almost identical to the woman in the drawing, peers over Crite’s shoulder. In a letter describing the content
of the painting, Chisholm explained that the woman in the yellow dress was a “neighbor” and that “he was comparing real Boston African American faces with the African art as a means of determining (or guessing) at the area and tribe from which the person was descended.” The donor also mentions in her letter that this painting was “for his design of a mural he was commissioned to do on the history of Boston.” The painting was given to Chisholm when she conducted an oral history interview with Crite in 1977. A copy of the transcript of this interview is included in the African American Episcopal Historical Collection of the Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, RG A13.

Following Dr. Chisholm’s gifts, several other donors have contributed to the collection: the Rev. John L. Zachritz and Mrs. Helenmarie Zachritz, who met and developed a friendship with Crite while Father Zachritz was studying at the Episcopal Divinity School and serving at St. Stephen’s Church in Boston; the Rev. Dr. J. Robert Wright who met Crite in the late 60s at Boston’s St. John the Evangelist, where Crite sometimes served at the alter when Dr. Wright celebrated the Mass; and the Rev. Dr. Frank VanDevelde who acquired his Crite pieces on a mission trip in Mexico.

Other pieces in the collection were purchased at auction.

**Related Archival Materials:**

Allan Rohan Crite Oral History Transcript, African American Episcopal Historical Collection, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives (Collection # RG A13)


ALLAN ROHAN CRITE MATERIALS AT VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Artworks Displayed in Foyer of Aspinwall Hall:

_In the Beginning._ By Allan Rohan Crite.

_Glory to God on High._ By Allan Rohan Crite.
Pen and ink with color and remnants of gold leaf, 1950s. 10.5” x 15.5”. Purchased for $3650 (in a lot with _In the Beginning_) from the Swann Galleries by the Bishop Payne Library in July 2007. Part of RG A24.

_An Impression of an Exhibition, National Center of Afro-American Artists._ By Allan Rohan Crite.

_African American Woman Presenting Newborn Child to Friends._ By Allan Rohan Crite.

_The Subway Train._ By Allan Rohan Crite.

_Riders on a Subway Train._ By Allan Rohan Crite.

Artwork Displayed in Public Area of the Bishop Payne Library:

_Allan Rohan Crite: Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Celebration and Exhibition, 1985._
Location: Hanging in the Reference Area, Main Floor of BPL.
Books Available in Open Stacks of the Bishop Payne Library (Listed Chronologically):

Book containing artworks by Crite, illustrating the Eucharistic prayer of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.
*Call Number: N8054 .C934 1947*

Book containing artworks by Crite, illustrating the spirituals *Nobody Knows the Trouble I See, Heaven*, and *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*.
*Call Number: N8150 .T531 1948*

Book containing artworks by Crite.
*Call Number: N8053 .C934 1969*

Book containing artworks by Crite.
*Call Number: BX5918.M4 E64*

Book containing artworks by Crite.
*Call Number: N6538.N5 P44 1992*

Reference work with entry on Crite.
*Call Number: BPL Reference E185.96.W629 1999 12th ed.*

Published in conjunction with the May 2001 exhibition at the Frye Art Museum, this catalogue presents 53 color reproductions of the work of artist Allan Rohan Crite, whose paintings illustrate everyday activities.
*Call Number: N6537.C75 A4 2001*
Artworks Requiring Assistance from Library Staff (Listed Chronologically):

*The Annunciation.* By Allan Rohan Crite.  
Diptych linoleum cut, hand colored with watercolor and gold leaf, circa 1947. 6.25” x 9”. Purchased from the Swann Galleries for $1480 by the Bishop Payne Library in October 2010. Part of RG A24  
Location: Archives Reading Room, Lower Level of BPL.

*St. James Apostle…* By Allan Rohan Crite  
Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #3.

*Neighborhood Madonna.* By Allan Rohan Crite.  
Linocut with watercolor and gold leaf background, circa 1950, signed by the artist on the back, undated. 13” x 15”. For a description of the piece in the artist’s own words, see the service leaflet listed in this document “Nuestra Señora de la Vicinidad Neighborhood Madonna, Service of Solemn Evensong and the Blessing of the 'Icon' of Jesus and Mary” (2017.083). Neighborhood Madonna is a gift of the Rev. John L. Zachritz and Mrs. Helenmarie Zachritz, March 2016 (2016.0008).  
Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #4.

*Untitled.* By Allan Rohan Crite.  
Notecard with a print of an artwork on the cover, depicting a mother, father, and child, 1956. 4.25” x 5”. Gift of Dr. Linda A. Chisholm, February 2014 (2014.0019).  
Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #2.

*O Mary, Where Is Your Baby?* By Allan Rohan Crite.  
Offset lithograph, circa 1970. Signed and numbered 87/150. 16.625” x 21.5”. Purchased from the Swann Galleries for $1045 by the Bishop Payne Library in February 2011. Item was originally purchased under the title *The Presentation*, but subsequent research has suggested the piece is based upon the spiritual *O Mary, Where Is Your Baby?*. For more information on the name, see collection control file. Part of RG A24  
Location: Hanging in Archives Processing Room, Lower Level of BPL.

*Allan Rohan Crite Self-Portrait.* By Allan Rohan Crite.  
Pen and ink and watercolor, 1977. 8.5” x 11”. Gift of Dr. Linda A. Chisholm, October 2006.  
Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #2.

*Untitled.* By Allan Rohan Crite.
Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC Flat File.

**Untitled. By Allan Rohan Crite.**
Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #2.

**Untitled. By Allan Rohan Crite.**
Location: Rare Book Room, Displayed on Table.

**Published Materials and Other Volumes, Requiring Assistance from Library Staff (Listed Chronologically):**

**Crite, Allan Rohan. “Hindu Studies China Japan.” Boston, 1937.**
Composition book in frail condition. 6.0” x 8”. Purchased from dealer by the Bishop Payne Library, April 2017 (2017.082). Part of RG A24
Location: Archives Processing Area, In process.

Additional information from Dealer: “Dated by Crite on the front cover with his address on first page. The spine has been reinforced with a makeshift binding and clear tape. There are approximately 98 sketches, including watercolors, pencil and ink drawings. Cover and pages are brittle, with extensive chipping and wear to bottom right corner of the cover and the pages within, not affecting images. Many pages are unhinged from binding. Numerous newspaper clippings between pages, worn with chips due to repeated study, as most were resources for Crite. Included is an extensive list of reference books toward the last couple of pages, handwritten in pen. A red sticker with “#6” on the rear cover, possibly indicating that this is Crite’s 6th sketchbook. Beautiful, decorative and detailed sketches of female dancers, water carriers, male builders, nobility, wealthy men and women and ancient spirits of Asia. All sketches, some colored, contain Crite’s notes and labels. Crite describes in detail ancient dance rituals. There are sketches of various regimes, such as the Mancho Regime, including nobility and priests, with all parts of their costumes labeled. The section on Japan begins with Crite’s outlined history. Soldiers and the privileged class are sketched in black and white with notes describing the colors designated to each design. There is also a section that begins with a typed outline of the history of India and China.”

**Crite, Allan Rohan. “Notebook 7: Medieval [sic] Costumes Middle Ages, Costumes Middle Ages to 1806.” Boston, [1930s].**
Composition book in frail condition. 6.0” x 8”. Purchased from dealer by the Bishop Payne Library, April 2017 (2017.082). Part of RG A24

Book containing artworks by Crite.

Location: *BPL Circulation Desk—Rare*  
*N8054.C934 1947*


A series of drawings from the liturgy of Holy Week, with texts from the Psalms and the Prophets.

Location: *BPL Circulation Desk—Rare Pamphlets*  
*N8052.4.C934 1948*


Location: *BPL Circulation Desk—Rare*  
*N8150.C7*


Location: *BPL Circulation Desk—Rare*  
*BV53.C75 1954*


Location: *BPL Circulation Desk—Rare*  
*PS3505.R58 R4 1959*

Crite, Allan Rohan. *Liturgical Year, Christmas 1960-Good Friday-Easter 1961*


Location: *BPL Circulation Desk—Rare*  
*N8050.C75 1962*

Location: BPL Circulation Desk—Rare Pamphlets E169.1.C934 1968

Crite, Allan Rohan. *An Autobiographical Sketch*. “@ 1976, Number 4.”
Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #2.

Location: BPL Circulation Desk—Rare F73.9.N4 C75 1977

Pamphlet containing artworks by Crite.
Location: BPL Circulation Desk—Pamphlets PAM 1977 189

Location: BPL Circulation Desk—Rare Folio BS2823 1995
Crite, Allan Rohan. *Liturgical Year.*
Bound volume of church bulletin covers for the liturgical year, not dated.
Location: BPL Circulation Desk—Rare N8010 .C75

Archival Material (Listed Chronologically):

“La Fiesta De La Natividad, Christmas Day 1966, Holy Cross Church, Acapulco.”
Church bulletin with cover art by Allan Rohan Crite. Gift of the Rev. Dr. Frank VanDeventer, February 2017 (2016.0104).
Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #2.

Two copies of service leaflet with cover art by Allan Rohan Crite. One is in black and white. The second copy appears to be hand colored. Gift of the Rev. Dr. Frank VanDeventer, February 2017 (2016.0104).
Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #2.

Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #2.

*Allan Rohan Crite Oral History Transcript.*
A 64-page transcription of two oral history interviews with Allan Rohan Crite, conducted on June 1, 1977 by Linda Chisholm for the Oral History Collection at Columbia University.
On-line Finding Aid:
http://www.vts.edu/ftpimages/95/download/RGA13CriteOHFindingAid.pdf

"Please Come to a Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for Annamae Crite,"
May 1977, St. Bartholomew's Church, Cambridge, MA. Invitation to memorial service for Annamae Crite, the mother of Allan Rohan Crite.
Invitation designed by Allan Rohan Crite.
"Nuestra Señora de la Vicinidad Neighborhood Madonna, Service of Solemn Evensong and the Blessing of the 'Icon' of Jesus and Mary, 5 p.m. Sunday 14 August 1977," St. Stephen's Church Boston.

Service leaflet designed by Allan Rohan Crite, with color drawing of the icon on front cover, and a drawing of the church on an insert. Also included is a thorough written description of the icon. The icon is owned by the AAEHC and is listed in this guide as Neighborhood Madonna (2016.0008). Gift of the Rev. John L. Zachritz and Mrs. Helenmarie Zachritz, December 2017 (2017.083).

Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #2.


Location: BPL Circulation Desk—Rare N5804 .C75 1990

Photograph of Allan Rohan Crite and Jackie Cox "taken at the dedication of the clerestory window at Christ Church, Bronxville, NY, in his honor," 1994

Color Photograph 6” x 4”. Gift of Dr. Linda Chisholm and Mrs. Patricia Owen Schaffer, September 2017 (2017.084). Related item may be found in accession 2018.004 in RG A50.

Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #2.

Miscellaneous Ephemeral Items


Location: BPL Archives, RG A24 Allan Rohan Crite Collection, AAEHC over-sized (o/s) box #2.

Access Points:

Crite, Allan Rohan, 1910-2007
African American Episcopalians
African American artists
Art, American –20th century.
Boston (Mass.)