



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Florence Allen Papers, 1920-1997, in the Archives of American Art

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Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Florence Allen papers
Date:	1920-1997
Identifier:	AAA.alleflor
Creator:	Allen, Florence W. (Florence Wysinger), 1913-1997
Extent:	0.5 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The collection measures 0.5 linear feet, dates from 1920 to 1997, and documents the career of artist's model Florence Allen. Found within the papers are biographical material, letters, notes and writings, artwork, and printed material. Of particular interest are a wide variety of photographs, including 19th century photographs of Allen family members, photographs of Florence Allen posing for artists, socializing with famous friends such as Paul Robeson, Harry Belafonte, Paul Newman, Allen Ginsberg, and participating in protest marches. There is also an autographed photo of Bob Hope.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Florence Allen papers were donated in 1995 and 1999 by Florence Allen via Austin Conkey, an informal executor, who maintained Allen's papers.

Processing Information

The papers were processed in July 2005 by Jean Fitzgerald.

Preferred Citation

Florence Allen papers, 1920-1997. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

The collection is open for research. Use requires an appointment.

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Biographical Note

Florence Wysinger Allen was born in Oakland, California, in 1913, the granddaughter of early African-American settlers. Her mother, née Moore, was a concert pianist, and her father, Arthur, as a boy in 1892, was named in the case of *Wysinger vs. Crookshank* which led to the desegregation of schools in California.

Florence Allen was educated at Fremont High School and later became involved in the San Francisco literary and artistic community as a civil rights activist and newspaper columnist. She began modeling in 1933 and worked as an artist's model for most of the prominent figurative painters working in the Bay Area of San Francisco, including Diego Rivera, Mark Rothko, and Wayne Thiebaud. She also worked as a model in university art classes, including those at the San Francisco Art Institute, Mills College, University of California at Berkeley, Stanford University, and the California College of Arts and Crafts.

In 1945, Ms. Allen founded the San Francisco Models' Guild. After injuries from a traffic accident limited her mobility in 1987, she became the Model Coordinator at the College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland where she also taught a Model Certification Workshop.

Florence Allen died June 1, 1997 in El Sobrante, California.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of artist's model Florence Allen measure 0.5 linear feet and date from 1920-1997. Found within the papers are biographical material, scattered letters that generally discuss some of Allen's activities, miscellaneous notes and writings, a drawing and a silhouette, and clippings. The primary value of this collection rests in its wide variety of photographs. As well as 19th century photographs of Allen family members, the collection contains photographs of Florence Allen posing for artists, socializing with famous friends such as Paul Robeson, Harry Belafonte, Paul Newman and Allen Ginsberg, and participating in protest marches. There is also an autographed photo of Bob Hope.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Women artists

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Belafonte, Harry, 1927- -- Photographs

Newman, Paul, 1925- -- Photographs

Occupations:

Artists' models -- California -- San Francisco

Container Listing

Series 1: Florence Allen Papers, 1920-1987

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: The series contains biographical material, scattered letters that generally discuss some of Allen's activities, miscellaneous notes and writings, a drawing and a silhouette, clippings, and a wide variety of photographs. In addition to 19th century photographs of Allen family members, the series includes photographs of Florence Allen posing for artists, socializing with famous friends such as Paul Robeson, Harry Belafonte, Paul Newman and Allen Ginsberg, and participating in protest marches. There is also an autographed photo of Bob Hope.

Box 1, Folder 1	Diploma, 1942
Box 1, Folder 2	Constitution and By-Laws of the San Francisco Models' Guild and Dues Book, 1947
Box 1, Folder 3	Letters, undated
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters, undated
Box 1, Folder 5	Letters, 1962-1977
Box 1, Folder 6	Letters, 1980-1985
Box 1, Folder 7	Typescript "A Short History of the Visalia Colored School" By Mervyn G. Shippey, 1970
Box 1, Folder 8	Miscellaneous Notes and Writings, undated
Box 1, Folder 9	Cut-out Silhouette Portrait and a Drawing, undated
Box 1, Folder 10-13	Clippings, 1945-1997, undated
Box 1, Folder 14	Autographed Brochure for Actor, Scott Beach, undated
Box 1, Folder 15-18	Photographs of Family Members, undated
Box 1, Folder 19	Photographs of Family Members, 1920-1987, undated
Box 1, Folder 20-21	Photographs of Family Members, undated
Box 1, Folder 22	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987 Notes: See also OV 2.
Box 1, Folder 23	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987

Box 1, Folder 24	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987
Box 1, Folder 25	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987
Box 1, Folder 26	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987
Box 1, Folder 27	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987
Box 1, Folder 28	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1950s
Box 1, Folder 29	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987
Box 1, Folder 30	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987
Box 1, Folder 31	Photographs of Florence Allen with Others, 1950s Notes: Includes photographs of Paul Robeson and Harry Belafonte.
Box 1, Folder 32	Photographs of Florence Allen and Florence Allen with Others, 1952-1956
Box 1, Folder 33	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987
Box 1, Folder 34	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987
Box 1, Folder 35	Photographs of Florence Allen, 1920-1987
Box 1, Folder 36	Photographs of Florence Allen's Friends, 1940s, undated Notes: Includes autographed photograph of Bob Hope.
Box 1, Folder 37	Photographs of Florence Allen's Friends, undated
Box 1, Folder 38	Photographs of Portrait Busts and View of a Garden, undated
Box OV 2	Oversized Photographs of Family Members and Florence Allen, undated

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