



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Arwin Galleries Records, 1948-1981, in the Archives of American Art

Sarah Mundy and Christopher DeMairo

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2020/12/9, 2022/4/21

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Arwin Galleries records
Date:	1948-1981
Identifier:	AAA.arwigall
Creator:	Arwin Galleries (Detroit, Mich.)
Extent:	8.7 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The records of Detroit art gallery Arwin Galleries measure 8.7 linear feet and date from 1948 to 1981. The collection comprises administrative records including sales, a financial ledger of artists' account consignment and loan records; personal and professional correspondence; artist files for Chuang Chi, Richard Kozlow, Ben and Bernarda Bryson Shahn, Jo Snyder, Russel Thayer, Adja Yunkers, and others; printed materials documenting the 1963 fire at the gallery, exhibitions, and other activities related to the gallery; artwork by Frederick Simper, Donald Snyder, and a few others; and photographic materials and moving images including photos of the Arwins, gallery artists, and exhibitions, and two film reels relating to the gallery fire.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Arwin Galleries records were donated in 1981, 1984 and 2021 by Melanie Arwin, the daughter of Lester and Kathleen Arwin.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Sarah Mundy in 2020. The 2021 addition was processed and added to the finding aid by Christopher DeMairo in 2022.

Preferred Citation

Arwin Galleries records, 1948-1981. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

Researchers interested in accessing audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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Biographical / Historical

The Arwin Galleries (est. 1963-1981) was founded by Lester and Kathleen (Kitty) Arwin in Detroit, Michigan.

Although intending to move to Chicago in the 1930s, Lester Arwin found himself remaining in Detroit due to lack of funds. There he spent time observing Diego Rivera painting the murals at the Detroit Institute of Art. He also visited Rivera's studio and purchased his first piece of artwork, thus beginning his career as an art collector and dealer. Arwin served as director of Grinnell Art Galleries prior to opening his own business.

In 1963, Lester and his wife Kitty opened the Arwin Galleries, specializing in contemporary art, in Robinsons Furniture Store on Washington Boulevard. A fire at the gallery in 1963 destroyed approximately \$300,000 worth of artwork, including works by Picasso with an estimated value of \$150,000. The Arwin Galleries reopened at W. Grand River in 1965. The Arwins worked closely with many renowned artists such as Richard Kozlow, Ben Shahn, and numerous others.

Lester and Kitty Arwin died in 1981.

Scope and Contents

The records of Detroit art gallery Arwin Galleries measure 8.7 linear feet and date from 1948 to 1981. The collection comprises administrative records containing sales records, consignment and loan records, appraisals, framing and graphics orders, a financial ledger of artists' accounts, and other administrative documents; personal and professional correspondence; artist's files for Chuang Chi, Richard Kozlow, Ben and Bernarda Bryson Shahn, Jo Snyder, Russel Thayer, Adja Yunkers, and others; printed materials documenting the 1963 fire at the gallery, exhibitions, and other articles related to the gallery; artwork by Frederick Simper, Donald Snyder, and a few others; and photographic materials and moving images include portraits and candid shots of the Arwins, gallery installations and openings, artists, works of art, and two film reels relating to the fire at the gallery.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as six series.

- Series 1: Administrative Records, 1959-1981 (2.5 linear feet; Boxes 1-3, 13, OV 11)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1958-1981 (0.4 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 3: Artist's Files, 1948-1981 (4.0 linear feet; Boxes 3-7, 13, OV 11)
- Series 4: Printed Materials, 1956-1981 (0.4 linear feet; Boxes 7-8, OV 11)
- Series 5: Artwork, circa 1970s (0.2 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 6: Photographic Materials and Moving Images, circa 1950-1981 (0.8 linear feet; Box 3, FC 12)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Women art dealers

Types of Materials:

Drawings

Motion pictures

Names:

Arwin, Kathleen G.

Arwin, Lester B.

Shahn, Ben, 1898-1969

Yunkers, Adja, 1900-1983

Functions:

Art galleries, Commercial -- Michigan

Container Listing

Series 1: Administrative Records, 1959-1981

2.5 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3, 13, OV 11)

Scope and Contents: Series includes business records and correspondence for clients and vendors; the gallery's financial and legal documents; and other records documenting the gallery's daily administrative activities.

Arrangement: Series is arranged as two subseries:

- 1.1: Alphabetical Files, 1959-1981
- 1.2: General Administrative Files, 1960-1981

Subseries 1.1: Alphabetical Files, 1959-1981

Scope and Contents: Files in the subseries document the gallery's business relationships with various organizations and businesses, as well as the Arwin's procurement and sale of various regional artworks.

Box 1, Folder 1	African Art, 1973-1975
Box 1, Folder 2	Amnesty International, 1977-1979
Box 1, Folder 3	Anslow Doctor's Office, circa 1970
Oversize 11	Anslow Doctor's Office, circa 1970
Box 1, Folder 4	Art Gallery of Windsor, 1963-1978
Box 1, Folder 5	California Art, 1963-1974
Box 1, Folder 6	Detroit Art Dealers Association, 1979-1980
Box 1, Folder 7	Driftwood Originals, 1978-1980
Box 1, Folder 8	Ediciones Poligrafa, 1977-1980
Box 1, Folder 9	Éditions de la Tortue, 1971-1974
Box 1, Folder 10	Ferdinand Roten Galleries, 1966-1979
Box 1, Folder 12	French Art, 1972-1973
Box 1, Folder 13	Grogan Color Graphics, 1973-1979
Box 1, Folder 14	Haitian Art, 1959-1977
Box 1, Folder 11	Inuit Art, 1976-1980

Box 1, Folder 15	James Dugdale and Associates, 1971-1979
Oversize 11	James Dugdale and Associates, 1971-1979
Box 1, Folder 16	J.L. Hudson Gallery, 1974-1980
Box 1, Folder 17	Japanese Art, 1959-1966
Box 1, Folder 18	Kraushaar Galleries, 1966
Box 1, Folder 19-20	London Arts Group, 1972-1980
Box 1, Folder 21	Lublin Graphics, Inc., 1969-1972
Box 1, Folder 22	Mixed-Media, Ltd., 1972-1979
Box 1, Folder 23	New York Art, 1967-1980
Box 1, Folder 24	Pratt Graphics Center, 1970-1979
Box 1, Folder 25	Pre-Columbian Art, 1970-1981
Box 1, Folder 26	Prints on Prince Street, 1974-1976
Box 1, Folder 27	Renaissance Center, 1977-1980
Box 1, Folder 28	Samuel Stein Fine Arts, Ltd., 1971-1979
Box 1, Folder 29	Screen Print Workshop, 1977-1981
Box 1, Folder 30	Source Gallery, 1977-1980
Box 1, Folder 31	Spectrum Fine Art, Ltd., 1978
Box 1, Folder 32	Texas Art, 1964-1971
Box 1, Folder 33	Toronto Art, 1974-1977
Box 1, Folder 34	Transworld Art Corp., 1975-1979
Box 1, Folder 35	Vision Nouvelle, 1972-1976
Box 1, Folder 36	Waddington Galleries, 1970-1980
Box 1, Folder 37	Washington, D.C. Art, 1979-1980

Subseries 1.2: General Administrative Files, 1960-1981

Arrangement: Appraisals are arranged alphabetically by client surname.

Scope and Contents: General administrative files contain appraisals by Lester Arwin, consignment and loan records, framing and graphics orders, inventories taken after the gallery fire in 1963, the gallery's lease and agreements, legal and insurance files, a financial ledger of artists' accounts, and sales records organized by artists and clients.

Box 1, Folder 38-40	Appraisals, A-C, 1969-1980
Box 2, Folder 1-12	Appraisals, D-Z, 1964-1980
Box 13, Folder 1-2	Artist's Accounts, Ledger, 1963-1981
Box 13, Folder 3	Artwork Shipped and Returned, 1974-1981
Box 2, Folder 13	Consignments, Prints, 1977
Box 2, Folder 14-15	Customer Accounts, 1970-1980
Box 2, Folder 16	Customs, 1979
Box 2, Folder 17-20	Framing Orders, 1968-1981
Box 2, Folder 21	Gallery Lease and Agreements, 1965-1977
Box 2, Folder 22-25	Graphics Orders, 1964-1981
Box 2, Folder 26	Imported Art, 1970-1973
Box 2, Folder 27	Insurance, 1964-1978
Box 2, Folder 28-30	Inventories Related to Gallery Fire, 1963-1964
Box 2, Folder 31	Invoices Paid by Arwin, 1980-1981
Box 2, Folder 32	Legal, 1964-1971
Box 2, Folder 33	Loans, 1960-1979
Box 2, Folder 34	Price Lists, circa 1980
Box 2, Folder 35-36	Public Relations, 1973-1980
Oversize 11	Public Relations, 1973-1980
Box 2, Folder 37	Restoration and Repair of Artwork, 1978-1981

Box 2, Folder 38-39	Sales Card File by Artist, 1965-1978
Box 3, Folder 1	Sales Card File by Artist, 1965-1978
Box 3, Folder 2	Sales Card File by Artist, A-O, 1967-1980
Box 3, Folder 3	Sales Card File by Artist, P-Z, 1967-1980
Box 3, Folder 4	Sales Ledger by Client, A-L, 1965-1974
Box 3, Folder 5	Sales Ledger by Client, M-Z, 1965-1974

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1958-1981

0.4 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Personal correspondence includes get-well letters to Lester Arwin and holiday cards to the Arwins; correspondence with customers; correspondence regarding speeches by Lester Arwin; and general chronological correspondence.

Box 3, Folder 6	Personal, Letters to Lester Arwin, 1959-1980
Box 3, Folder 7-8	Personal, Holiday Cards to the Arwins, circa 1965-circa 1975
Box 3, Folder 9	Customers, 1969-1980
Box 3, Folder 10	Speeches, Regarding, 1965-1975 Notes: Includes speech manuscripts by Lester Arwin.
Box 3, Folder 11-12	General, 1958-1981

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Series 3: Artist's Files, 1948-1981

4 Linear feet (Boxes 3-7, 13, OV 11)

Scope and Contents: Artist's files contain correspondence, photographs of artwork and artists, artwork, publicity material, writings, and business records on 86 artists including Harold Altman, Harry Bertoia, William Bostick, Graciela Rodo Boulanger, Irma Cavat, Chuang Chi, Mihran Chobanian, Kosso Eloul, Max Ginsburg, Max Kahn, Deborah Kashdan, Ed Kasprowicz, John Kearney, Barbara Keidan, Richard Kozlow, Edward Pramuk, Renée Rauzy, Marlis Saunders, Leonard Schwartz, Tom Seawell, Ben and Bernarda Bryson Shahn, David Sharp, Jo Snyder, Nancy S. Stanford, Romeo Tabuena, Russel Thayer, Emil Weddige, and Adja Yunkers.

Box 3, Folder 13	A, 1970s
Box 3, Folder 14	Altman, Harold, 1971-1981
Box 3, Folder 15-16	B, 1971-1981
Box 3, Folder 17	Berg, Irving, 1976-1979
Box 3, Folder 18	Bertoia, Harry, 1976-1979
Box 3, Folder 19	Bostick, William, 1964-1980
Oversize 11	Bostick, William, 1964-1980
Box 3, Folder 20	Boulanger, Graciela Rodo, 1970-1978
Box 3, Folder 21	Brun, Tom, 1963-1977
Box 3, Folder 22	Butkin, John, 1975-1980
Box 3, Folder 23	C, 1962-1979
Box 3, Folder 24	Catrell, Ray, 1964-1980
Box 4, Folder 1	Cavat, Irma, 1960-1980
Box 4, Folder 2	Che, Chuang, 1971-1980
Box 4, Folder 3	Chobanian, Mihran, 1971-1978
Box 4, Folder 4	Cibere, Joseph, 1976-1981
Box 4, Folder 5	Cohen, Arthur, 1976-1979
Box 4, Folder 6	Copeland, Lila, 1968-1972

Box 4, Folder 7	D, circa 1975-1981
Box 4, Folder 8	Damarais, Joseph, 1968-1981
Box 4, Folder 9	de Montfort, G. Simon, 1971-1972
Box 4, Folder 10	de Ruth, Jan, 1967-1981
Box 4, Folder 11	E, 1958-1978
Box 4, Folder 12	Elman, Ray, 1974-1980
Box 4, Folder 13	Eloul, Kosso, 1967-1980
Box 4, Folder 14	F, 1973-1980
Box 4, Folder 15	Fairfield, Richard, 1967-1981
Box 4, Folder 16	Florsheim, Robert, 1976-1980
Box 4, Folder 17	G, 1967-1980
Box 4, Folder 18	Ginsburg, Max and Irwin Greenberg, 1969-1981
Box 4, Folder 19	Glassgold, Harry, 1967-1973
Box 4, Folder 20	Golden, Libby, 1965-1978
Box 4, Folder 21-22	Gould, John, 1962-1980
Box 4, Folder 23	Gould, Ken, 1963-1980
Box 4, Folder 24	H, 1964-1980
Box 4, Folder 25	Howell, Frank, 1980
Box 5, Folder 1	I, circa 1971
Box 5, Folder 2	J, 1975-1980
Box 5, Folder 3	Jerzy, Richard, 1970-1981
Box 5, Folder 4-7	Jones, W. Louis, 1966-1980
Box 5, Folder 8	K, circa 1974
Box 5, Folder 9	Kahn, Max, 1963-1973

Box 5, Folder 10	Kaiman, Charles, 1973-1978
Box 5, Folder 11	Kallem, Herbert, 1954-1964
Box 5, Folder 12	Kasprowicz, Ed, 1967-1980
Box 5, Folder 13	Kashdan, Deborah, 1979
Box 5, Folder 14	Kearny, John, 1965-1975
Box 5, Folder 15	Keidan, Barbara, 1970-1976
Box 5, Folder 16-19	Kozlow, Richard, 1948-1977
Oversize 11	Kozlow, Richard, 1948-1977
Box 5, Folder 20	L, 1962-1981
Box 5, Folder 21	Leepa, Allen, 1953-1980
Box 5, Folder 22-23	Letendra, Rita, 1972-1981
Box 5, Folder 24	Lewis, William, 1966-1981
Box 5, Folder 25	Loomis-Vansen, Leslie and Charles W. Vansen, 1976-1979
Box 5, Folder 26	M, circa 1967-1981
Oversize 11	M, circa 1967-1981
Box 6, Folder 1	McChesney, Clifton, 1978-1981
Box 6, Folder 2-3	McClure, Thomas, 1964-1979
Box 6, Folder 4	Mills, Gray, 1969-1971
Box 6, Folder 5-6	Mintz, Harry, 1961-1979
Box 6, Folder 7	N, circa 1970
Box 6, Folder 8	Nartonis, Cynthia, 1980-1981
Box 6, Folder 9	Noyer, Albert, 1977-1979
Box 6, Folder 10	O, 1971-1979
Box 6, Folder 11	Offner, Elliot, 1973-1976

Box 6, Folder 12	P, 1968-1981
Box 6, Folder 13-14	Pappas, John, 1966-1981
Box 6, Folder 15	Parker, Robert, 1975-1980
Box 6, Folder 16	Pepitone, Richard, 1978-1979
Box 6, Folder 17	Perazio-Itkin, Colette, 1978-1981
Box 6, Folder 18	Peterson, Dean, 1977-1980
Box 6, Folder 19	Pinto, James, 1965-1980
Box 6, Folder 20	Plotkin, Linda, 1974-1980
Box 6, Folder 21	Poleskie, Steve, 1970-1977
Box 6, Folder 22	Pramuk, Edward, 1979
Box 6, Folder 23-24	R, 1965-1981
Box 6, Folder 25	Rauzy, Renee and Jean Rouzaud, 1973-1974
Box 6, Folder 26	Redstone, Louis, 1974-1979
Box 13, Folder 4	Rehn, Frank; Frank K. M. Rehn, Inc., 1961-1978
Box 6, Folder 27-29	Rizk, Romanos, 1968-1981
Box 6, Folder 30	Romano, Clare and John Ross, 1970-1975
Box 6, Folder 31	Rymph, Steven, 1973
Box 6, Folder 32	S, 1964-1980
Box 7, Folder 1	S, 1964-1980
Box 7, Folder 2	Sanford, Nancy Salome, 1979-1981
Box 7, Folder 3-4	Sarkisian, Sarkis, 1962-1979
Box 7, Folder 5	Saunders, Marlis, 1973-1975
Box 7, Folder 6	Seawell, Tom, 1966-1972
Box 7, Folder 7	Shahn, Ben and Bernarda Bryson, 1966-1970

Box 7, Folder 8	Sharp, David, 1966-1981
Box 7, Folder 9	Simper, Fred, 1963-1979
Box 7, Folder 10	Smith, Alden, 1962-1981
Box 7, Folder 11	Snyder, Jo and Don, 1969-1980
Box 7, Folder 12	T, 1961-1973
Box 7, Folder 13	Tabuena, Romeo, 1967-1969
Box 7, Folder 14	Tammany, David, 1972-1980
Box 7, Folder 15	Taylor, Ann, 1967-1981
Box 7, Folder 16	Taylor, Cledie, 1974-1980
Box 7, Folder 17	Thayer, Russel, 1978-1979
Box 7, Folder 18	Tillery, Lynn, 1978-1981
Box 7, Folder 19	Treaster, Richard, 1968-1978
Box 7, Folder 20	U, 1970-1978
Box 7, Folder 21	V, 1956-1980
Box 7, Folder 22	Van Dyk, Dick, 1978-1979
Box 7, Folder 23	Van Haren, John, 1971-1976
Box 7, Folder 24	W, 1959-1980
Box 7, Folder 25-26	Weddige, Emil, 1960-1973
Box 7, Folder 27	Wernher, Derek, 1977-1978
Box 7, Folder 28	Wilson, Sol, 1965-1970
Box 7, Folder 29	Woodward, William, 1979-1980
Box 7, Folder 30-31	Wyse, Alex, 1968-1981
Box 7, Folder 32	X-Z, 1975-1977
Box 7, Folder 33	Yunkers, Adja, 1970-1979

Box 7, Folder 34 Zelman, David, 1979-1980

Box 13, Folder 5 Mixed Artists, Biographical Summaries and Printed Material, 1970s-1980s

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Series 4: Printed Materials, 1956-1981

0.4 Linear feet (Boxes 7-8)

Scope and Contents: Series consists of art reproductions, art sales catalogs, brochures and pamphlets, clippings regarding the gallery fire in 1963, exhibition announcements, event programs, flyers, magazines, press releases, and the book *Bibliothèque Imaginaire: Caractère Noël* which highlights French printmaking.

Box 7, Folder 35	Art Reproductions, circa 1975
Box 7, Folder 36	Art Sales Catalogs, circa 1970-1981
Box 8, Folder 1	Book, <i>Bibliothèque Imaginaire: Caractère Noël</i> , 1956
Box 8, Folder 2	Brochures and Pamphlets, 1960s-1970s
Box 8, Folder 3-5	Clippings, 1958-1980
Box 8, Folder 6	Exhibition Announcements, 1963-1970s
Box 8, Folder 7	Event Program, 1959-circa 1963
Box 8, Folder 8	Flyers, 1960s-1970s
Box 8, Folder 9	Magazine, 1966
Box 8, Folder 10	Press Releases, circa 1960s

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Series 5: Artwork, circa 1970s

0.2 Linear feet (Box 8, OV 10)

Scope and Contents: Included in the series are drawings, sketches, and prints by Ruth Leaf, Frederick Simper, Donald Snyder, Riva Shwayder, and unidentified artists.

Box 8, Folder 11	Drawings / Painted Sketches, circa 1970s
Oversize 10	Drawings / Painted Sketches, circa 1970s
Oversize 10	Prints, circa 1970s
Box 8, Folder 12	Prints, circa 1970s
Box 8, Folder 13	Sketches, circa 1970s

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Series 6: Photographic Materials and Moving Images, circa 1950-1981

0.8 Linear feet (Box 8, OVs 9-10, FC 12)

Scope and Contents: The series contains portraits and snapshots of the Arwins, including their daughter Melanie; personal photographs of friends and colleagues, cats, and buildings; photos of artists Ben Shahn, Richard Kozlow, and others; and photos of gallery installations, openings, and events including a photograph by photojournalist Tony Spina. Also found are photos of works of art by Irma Cavat, John Kearney, Rick Ryan, Steve Taylor, Karel Appel, and Picasso; and two film reels related to the 1963 gallery fire.

Box 8, Folder 14	Arwin, Lester and Kathleen (Kitty), 1960s-1970s
Oversize 9	Arwin, Lester, 1960s-1970s
Box 8, Folder 15	Arwin, Melanie, circa 1955
Box 8, Folder 16	Personal, circa 1970s
Box 8, Folder 17	Others, circa 1960s-1970s
Box 8, Folder 18	Artists, circa 1966
Oversize 9	Artists, circa 1960s-1970s
Box 8, Folder 19	Events, circa 1963-1980
Oversize 9	Events, circa 1965
Box 8, Folder 20-21	Gallery Installations, circa 1950s-1960s
Oversize 10	Gallery Installation, circa 1960s
Box 8, Folder 22	Gallery Openings, 1960s-1970s
Box 8, Folder 23	Gallery, Various, 1965-1977
Box 8, Folder 24	Moving Images Related to Gallery Fire, circa 1963 Notes: Film reels housed off-site.
Item FC 12	Footage of Art Gallery, Picasso Show and Fire , 1963 December 1 Film reel (16mm) Notes: Head countdown: Dick Powell Court Martial of Captian Wycliff. It was leader from a tv show and doesn't correspond to the footage in the film.
Box 8, Folder 25-30	Works of Art, circa 1970s
Item FC 13	Arwin Gallery, Arwin Fire, reel 1, 1963

1 Film reel (16mm)

Item FC 14

Arwin Gallery, Arwin Fire, reel 2, 1963
1 Film reel (16mm)

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