



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

Leslie Cheek papers

Archives of American Art  
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
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## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects .....	2
Container Listing .....	

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Leslie Cheek papers
<b>Date:</b>	1940-1983 (bulk 1940-1942)
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.cheelesl
<b>Creator:</b>	Cheek, Leslie, 1908-
<b>Extent:</b>	4.2 Linear feet ((partially microfilmed on 1 reel))
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Material on reel 4885 was lent for microfilming in 1993 by Mary Tyler Cheek, widow of Leslie Cheek. She donated the unmicrofilmed material, 1993. Mrs. Cheek deposited additional papers in the College of William and Mary (where Cheek had founded the Fine Arts Department in 1936), the Virginia State Library, and the Museum of Modern Art.

### Location of Originals

Reel 4885: Originals located in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, N.Y..

### Related Materials

Also in the Archives are papers lent for microfilming on reel 4885 including material concerning the proposed exhibition, "For Us the Living," designed by Cheek with text written by Lewis Mumford for the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibit was never installed. Included are correspondence with Mumford, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, Nelson Rockefeller, Alfred Barr, and others; draft "scenarios" or exhibition narratives; sketches; and blueprints, 1940-1942. Also included is Cheek's 1983 correspondence with American Heritage magazine regarding a proposed article about the exhibition.

### Available Formats

35mm microfilm reel 4885 available for use at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

### Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center. Microfilmed materials must be consulted on microfilm.

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## Biographical / Historical

Leslie Cheek (1908-1992) was a museum director and editor in Virginia. Cheek studied Fine Arts and was trained in architecture and stage design. His work as director of the Baltimore Museum of Art was marked

by innovative and theatrical exhibitions, and led to his selection by the trustees of the Museum of Modern Art as curator for a planned exhibit "For Us The Living," regarding the rise of Nazism and fascism in Europe.

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## Scope and Contents

Papers, ca. 1938-1988, including files kept during Cheek's tenure as director at the Baltimore Museum of Art, 1939-1942, as editor at "Architectural Forum" magazine, 1945-1947, "House Beautiful" magazine, 1947-1942, and as head of the U.S. Army Camouflage Training Unit, 1942-1945. Also included are files related to projects he undertook from 1968 to 1988, following his tenure as Director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

Art -- Periodicals  
Exhibitions -- Design

### Names:

Baltimore Museum of Art  
Barr, Alfred H., Jr., 1902-1981  
For us the living (1940-1942 : New York, N.Y.)  
Mumford, Lewis, 1895-1990  
Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)  
Rockefeller, Abby Aldrich  
Rockefeller, Nelson A. (Nelson Aldrich), 1908-1979  
United States. Army. Camouflage Training Unit

### Occupations:

Designers  
Editors  
Museum directors

### Functions:

Art museums

### Preferred Titles:

*Architectural forum*  
*House beautiful*