



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Ching Ho Cheng
papers, circa 1950-2014, bulk 1970-1989,
in the Archives of American Art

Hilary Price

2016 December 7

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Ching Ho Cheng papers
Identifier:	AAA.chenchin
Date:	circa 1950-2014 (bulk 1970-1989)
Extent:	6.8 Linear feet
Creator:	Cheng, Ching Ho
Language:	Collection is in English
Summary:	The papers of New York City Asian American artist Ching Ho Cheng measure 6.8 linear feet and date from circa 1950 to 2014, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1970-1989. The collection documents Cheng's art career and life through biographical material, correspondence, personal business and estate records, printed material, a scrapbook, photographic material, artwork, sketchbooks, and artifacts.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Ching Ho Cheng papers were donated to the Archives of American Art in 2014 and 2016 by Sybao Cheng-Wilson, Cheng's sister and executor of the Ching Ho Cheng estate.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Hilary Price in 2015. The finding aid was updated to reflect the addition in 2016.

Preferred Citation

Ching Ho Cheng papers, circa 1950-2014, bulk 1970-1989. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Conditions Governing Use

The Ching Ho Cheng papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical / Historical

Ching Ho Cheng (1946-1989) was a naturalized Asian American artist of Chinese descent who worked primarily in New York City.

Cheng was born in Cuba but spent most of life in New York City. After receiving his BFA from the Cooper Union in 1968, Cheng lived in Paris and Amsterdam, where he had his first solo exhibition in 1976. Shortly after, Cheng moved back to New York City. He became associated with the Warhol circle, and took up residence in the Chelsea Hotel, where he lived until his death in 1989.

Working in the pop psychedelic style early in his career, Cheng later developed a technique of creating abstract paintings with stencils and torn paper that he treated and soaked. He was in more than fifteen exhibitions before his death, and his work has been collected posthumously by the Hirshhorn, the Whitney, and many other museums.

Scope and Contents

The papers of New York City Asian American artist Ching Ho Cheng measure 6.8 linear feet and date from circa 1950 to 2014, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1970-1989. The collection documents Cheng's art career and life through biographical material, correspondence, personal business and estate records, printed material, a scrapbook, photographic material, artwork, sketchbooks, and artifacts.

Biographical material includes artist's statements, biographical writings, lists, life and death documents, a memorial book, naturalization paperwork, and one file of collaborative poetry with David Rattray.

Correspondence includes letters and postcards from Cheng's friends, artists, and family, including Tally Brown, Ira Cohen, Gregory Millard, Vali Myers, David Rattray, and Dui Seid.

Personal business and estate records contain contracts, loan agreements, inventories, and other records documenting income and expenses.

Printed material is comprised of books, clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, journals, magazines, newsletters, postcards, press releases, programs, and posters documenting Cheng's career.

One scrapbook contains clippings and reproductions of Cheng's work.

Photographic material includes photographs, negatives, and slides featuring portraits of Cheng, Gregory Millard, Tally Brown, Vali Myers, Sybao Cheng-Wilson, and others.

Artwork and fifteen sketchbooks contain drawings and sketches, mostly quick studies of geometric compositions done in pencil, ink, and colored pencil.

Artifacts include a metal box, various fabric scraps, a paintbrush, and a blue enamel mug, which is the subject of one of Cheng's paintings.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as nine series

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1970-1990 (0.3 linear foot; Box 1)

- Series 2: Correspondence, 1957-2014 (2.2 linear feet; Box 1-3)
- Series 3: Personal Business and Estate Records, circa 1970-2010 (0.7 linear foot; Box 3-4)
- Series 4: Printed Material, 1954-2011 (1.1 linear feet; Box 4-5, 7, OV 9)
- Series 5: Scrapbook, 1982-1983 (1 folder; Box 5)
- Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1950-1990 (0.4 linear feet; Box 5, 7)
- Series 7: Artwork, circa 1960-1990 (1 linear foot; Box 5, 8, OV 10)
- Series 8: Sketchbooks, circa 1970-1990 (0.5 linear feet; Box 6, 8)
- Series 9: Artifacts, circa 1970-1990 (0.6 linear feet; Box 6)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Asian American artists
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Drawings
Photographs
Scrapbooks
Sketchbooks
Sketches

Names:

Brown, Tally
Cheng-Wilson, Sybao
Cohen, Ira
Millard, Gregory
Myers, Vali, 1930-2003
Rattray, David
Seid, Dui

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1970-1990

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Biographical material dates from circa 1970 to 1990 and includes artist's statements, biographical writings, lists, life and death documents, a memorial book, naturalization paperwork, and one file of collaborative poetry with David Rattray.

Box 1, Folder 1	Art Supply Lists, circa 1980s
Box 1, Folder 2	Artist's Statements and Biographical Writings, circa 1970s-1989
Box 1, Folder 3	Contact Lists, 1986
Box 1, Folder 4	Life and Death Documents, 1986-1989
Box 1, Folder 5	Memorial Book, 1989
Box 1, Folder 6	Naturalization, 1971-1977
Box 1, Folder 7	Pet Records, 1973-1984
Box 1, Folder 8	Writings, "Opening the Eyelid," Poetry Collaboration with David Rattray, circa 1986

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1957-2014

2.2 Linear feet (Box 1-3)

Correspondence dates from 1957-2014 and includes letters and postcards from Cheng's friends, artists, and family. Notable correspondents include Tally Brown, Ira Cohen, Gregory Millard, Vali Myers, David Rattray, and Dui Seid. Several folders contain letters from Cheng to friends, primarily Tally Brown and Dui Seid. Mixed in with letters are exhibition flyers, photographs, and two limited edition publications by Ira Cohen, published by the Bardo Matrix Press in Kathmandu, Nepal. This series also includes professional correspondence from galleries and museums to Cheng or his estate, managed Sybao Cheng-Wilson.

Box 1, Folder 9	List of Correspondents compiled by Sybao Cheng-Wilson, circa 2014
Box 1, Folder 10	Anderson, Gitte and William Thune, 1986-1989
Box 1, Folder 11	Andrews, Frank, 1979-1989
Box 1, Folder 12	A, General, circa 1980-1985
Box 1, Folder 13	Barrat, Martine, 1980-1987
Box 1, Folder 14	Brown, Tally (to Cheng), circa 1972-1980
Box 1, Folder 15	Brown, Tally (from Cheng), circa 1972-1985
Box 1, Folder 16	Brown, Tally (from Cheng and Greg Millard), <i>Geechies</i> Manuscript, 1981-1985
Box 1, Folder 17	B, General, 1975-1986
Box 1, Folder 18	Cheng, Paifong Robert (Father), 1957-1993
Box 1, Folder 19	Cheng, Pax (Half-brother), circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 20	Cheng, Rosita Yu-fan (Mother), 1977-1983
Box 1, Folder 21-22	Cheng-Wilson, Sybao (Sister), circa 1972-1989
Box 1, Folder 23	Cheng-Wilson, Sybao (Sister) (as executor of estate), 1994-2014
Box 1, Folder 24	Cho, Howard (Uncle), 1979-1985
Box 1, Folder 25	Cohen, Ira, 1975-1987
Box 1, Folder 26	C, General, 1977-1986 Includes cards from Bernard Childs

Box 1, Folder 27	Döhrrer, Claus, 1975-1987
Box 1, Folder 28	D, General, circa 1985-1987
Box 1, Folder 29	Eng, Faye, 1984-1987
Box 1, Folder 30	Engram, Timothy, 1965-1996
Box 1, Folder 31	Epstein, Diane, 1980-1989
Box 1, Folder 32	E-F, General, 1979-1989
Box 1, Folder 33	Gabrielli, Alexandria, 1977-1987
Box 2, Folder 1	Green, Ricky O'Dell, 1983-1989
Box 2, Folder 2	G, General, 1981-1988
Box 2, Folder 3	Haizlip, Ellis, 1983-1988
Box 2, Folder 4	H-J, General, 1977-1986 Includes notes from Buffie Johnson and a letter from Charles James
Box 2, Folder 5	Kolovakos, Gregory, 1985-1988
Box 2, Folder 6	Kumagi, Tokio, 1976-1986
Box 2, Folder 7	Kutch, Ron and Kiyoshi, 1979-1988
Box 2, Folder 8	K, General, 1978-1987
Box 2, Folder 9-10	Lesnowich, Barbara (Cheng's Psychic), 1974-1986
Box 2, Folder 11	Lutz, Winifred, 1985-1986
Box 2, Folder 12	L, General, circa 1975-1985
Box 2, Folder 13	Milinaire, Caterine, 1975-1985
Box 2, Folder 14	Millard, Gregory, 1978-1984
Box 2, Folder 15	Myers, Vali, 1970-1976

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 2, Folder 16	Myers, Vali, 1977-1988 Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 17	M, General, 1974-1987 Includes one illustrated letter from Cookie Mueller
Box 2, Folder 18	N-O, General, 1979, 1986
Box 2, Folder 19-20	Professional Correspondence, 1970s-1980s
Box 2, Folder 21	P, General, 1982-1988
Box 2, Folder 22-24	Rattray, David, 1970-1989
Box 2, Folder 25	R, General, 1973-1986
Box 2, Folder 26	Saunders, Mae, 1982-1989
Box 2, Folder 27	Schiff, Gert (includes many condolence letters), 1988-1989
Box 3, Folder 1	Seid, Dui (to Cheng), 1973-1985
Box 3, Folder 2	Seid, Dui (from Cheng), 1972-1979
Box 3, Folder 3	S, General, 1978-1987
Box 3, Folder 4	Tisa, Ken, circa 1979-1982
Box 3, Folder 5	T-V, General, 1978-1988
Box 3, Folder 6	Waitzkin, Stella, 1981-1989
Box 3, Folder 7	Wijers, Louwrien, 1979-1984
Box 3, Folder 8	W-Y, General, 1980-1988
Box 3, Folder 9-11	First Names Only and Unidentified Senders, circa 1970-1989

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Series 3: Personal Business and Estate Records, circa 1970-2010

0.7 Linear feet (Box 3-4)

Personal business and estate records date from circa 1970-2010 and contain contracts, loan agreements, inventories, and other records documenting income and expenses.

Box 3, Folder 12	Estate and Will, 1989-1990
Box 3, Folder 13-19	Expenses and Income, 1976-1985
Box 4, Folder 1-2	Expenses and Income, 1986-1989
Box 4, Folder 3	Lists and Loan Agreements, circa 1970-2010

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Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1970-2011

1.1 Linear feet (Box 1-5, 7, OV 9)

Printed material dates from circa 1970-2011 and is comprised of books, clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, journals, magazines, newsletters, postcards, press releases, programs, and posters. The material here predominantly documents the careers of Cheng and his friends. One folder contains material related to *Geechies*, a collection of poetry by Gregory Millard.

Box 4, Folder 4-5	Books, 1973-1994 Oversized book housed in Box 7, Folder 1
Box 4, Folder 6	Clippings, 1974-2004 Oversized clippings housed in Box 7, Folder 2
Box 4, Folder 7	Ephemera from <i>Geechies</i> , poetry by Gregory Millard, circa 1983
Box 4, Folder 8	Exhibition Announcements, 1976-1990
Box 4, Folder 9-10	Exhibition Catalogs, 1978-1986
Box 4, Folder 11	Journals, 1994, 1989
Box 4, Folder 12-17	Magazines, 1972-1992 Oversized magazine housed in Box 7, Folders 3-6
Box 4, Folder 18	Newsletters, 1986
Box 5, Folder 1	Newspaper, <i>The SoHo News</i> , 1977
Box 5, Folder 2	Pamphlet, Cleveland Museum of Art, 2011
Box 5, Folder 3-4	Postcards, 1970s
Box 5, Folder 5	Press Releases, 1976-1996
Box 5, Folder 6	Programs, circa 1976-1980
Box 7, Folder 1	Oversized Book, <i>Milk n' Honey</i> by Mati Klarwein from Box 4, Folder 4
Box 7, Folder 2	Oversized Clippings from Box 4, Folder 6
Box 7, Folder 3-6	Oversized Magazines from Box 4, Folders 12-17
Box OV 9	Posters, 1976-1985

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Series 5: Scrapbook, 1982-1983

1 Folder (Box 5)

The scrapbook dates from 1982-1983 and contains clippings and reproductions of Cheng's work.

Box 5, Folder 7

Scrapbook, 1982-1983

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Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1950-1990

0.4 Linear feet (Box 5, 7)

Photographic material dates from circa 1950-1990 and includes photographs, negatives, and slides featuring portraits of Cheng, Gregory Millard, Tally Brown, Vali Myers, Sybao Cheng-Wilson, and others. The folder titled "Artwork," contains photographs of Cheng's paintings, reference subjects, and photographs taken while a student. The photograph album consists of Cheng's work, travel pictures, and friends, including Gert Schiff.

Box 5, Folder 8-9	Cheng, Friends, Family, circa 1950-1989 Oversized photos housed in Box 7, Folder 8
Box 5, Folder 10	Artwork, 1960s-1980s Oversized photos housed in Box 7, Folder 9
Box 7, Folder 7	Photo Album, circa 1980s
Box 7, Folder 8	Oversized Cheng, Friends, Family from Box 5, Folder 8
Box 7, Folder 9	Oversized Artwork from Box 5, Folder 10

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Series 7: Artwork, circa 1960-1990

1 Linear foot (Box 5, 8, OV 10)

Artwork dates from circa 1960-1990 and includes over a hundred drawings and sketches, mostly quick studies of geometric compositions. These works are predominantly in pencil, ink, and colored pencil. Also included here is a leather bag similar to those he made and sold in the 1960s, and stencils used to create a larger work. One folder contains artwork by other unidentified artists.

Box 5, Folder 11	"Window" Drawings, circa 1980s
Box 5, Folder 12-14	Drawings and Sketches, 1970s-1980s Oversized drawings and sketches housed in Box 8, Folders 1-5
Box 5, Folder 15	Leather Bag, 1960s
Box 5, Folder 16	Artwork by Others, 1980s
Box 8, Folder 1-5	Oversized Drawings and Sketches from Box 5, Folders 12-14
Box OV 10	Oversized Stencils, circa 1980s

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Series 8: Sketchbooks, circa 1970-1990

0.5 Linear feet (Box 6, 8)

Fifteen sketchbooks date from circa 1970-1990 and are filled mostly with quick studies done in pencil of geometric compositions.

Box 6, Folder 1	Sketchbook, circa 1970
Box 6, Folder 2	Sketchbook, 1985
Box 6, Folder 3	Sketchbook, 1986
Box 6, Folder 4	Sketchbook, 1987
Box 6, Folder 5-6	Sketchbooks (4), 1980s
Box 8, Folder 6	Oversized Sketchbook, 1985
Box 8, Folder 7	Oversized Sketchbook, 1987
Box 8, Folder 8-12	Oversized Sketchbooks (5), 1980s

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Series 9: Artifacts, circa 1970-1990

0.6 Linear feet (Box 6)

Artifacts date from circa 1970-1990 and include a metal box which held some of the letters from Vali Myers, along with various fabric scraps. The letters can be found in Series 2: Correspondence. Also found here is a paintbrush, and a blue enamel mug, which is the subject of one of Cheng's paintings.

Box 6, Folder 7

Artifacts, 1970s-1980s

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