



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Lenore Chinn Papers, 1978-2024, in the Archives of American Art

Sarah Mundy

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Lenore Chinn papers
Date:	1978-2024
Identifier:	AAA.chinleno
Creator:	Chinn, Lenore (1949-)
Extent:	1.2 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of painter, photographer, and organizer Lenore Chinn measure 1.2 linear feet and date from 1978 to 2024. The collection documents Chinn's evolution as a realistic painter to a photographer. In addition, her papers reflect Chinn's various activities in key artistic and cultural organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. The collection comprises professional files, printed materials, and photograph books. Professional files include business records, correspondence, exhibition files, lecture material, and membership records for Lesbian Visual Artists, Asian American Women Artist Association, The San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Center, and Queer Cultural Center. Printed materials consist of announcements and catalogs for Chinn's exhibitions, event programs, a scrapbook, and San Francisco bay area journals and newspapers. A significant inclusion in the papers are Chinn's self-published books of photography featuring significant cultural events throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Lenore Chinn papers were donated in 2024 by Lenore Chinn.

Related Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds a 2020 July 3 oral history interview with Lenore Chinn conducted by Ben Gillespie and a 2023 November 27 and December 11 oral history with Lenore Chinn conducted by Ann Cvetkovich.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Sarah Mundy in 2024.

Preferred Citation

Lenore Chinn papers, 1978-2024. 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.

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Biographical / Historical

Lenore Chinn (1949-) is an activist, painter, and photographer in San Francisco, California. Chinn is a third-generation Chinese American. She studied Advertising Art and Design at City College of San Francisco and received a bachelor's degree in sociology from San Francisco State College in 1972. She participated in several important arts organizations including Asian American Women Artist Association (AAWAA), Queer Cultural Center (QCC), and Lesbian Visual Artists (LVA).

Scope and Contents

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Professional files include business records, correspondence, exhibition files, lecture material, and membership records for Lesbian Visual Artists, Asian American Women Artist Association, The San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Center, and Queer Cultural Center. Printed materials consist of announcements and catalogs for Chinn's exhibitions, event programs, a scrapbook, and San Francisco bay area journals and newspapers. A significant inclusion in the papers are Chinn's self-published books of photography featuring significant cultural events throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 3 series.

- Series 1: Professional Files, 1983-2024 (0.5 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 2: Printed Materials, 1978-2018 (0.3 linear feet; Box 1, OVs 2-3)
- Series 3: Photograph Books, 2015-2023 (0.4 linear feet; Box 1)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Activists (LGBTQ)
Asian American artists
Women artists

Occupations:

Painters -- California -- San Francisco
Photographers -- California -- San Francisco

Container Listing

Series 1: Professional Files, 1983-2024

0.5 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: The series includes loan records, a contract and agreement, sales invoices, correspondence with Tirza Latimer and Tee A. Corinne, lecture typescripts, lists of artwork and exhibition spaces, and a professional activities binder containing Chinn's CV, exhibition announcements, photos of Chinn's artwork, and other items relating to her career. Also found are membership records for Lesbian Visual Artists, Asian American Women Artist Association, The San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Center, and Queer Cultural Center. Chinn played a founding or early leadership role in these organizations.

Box 1, Folder 1	Award, Cable Car Award, 1990
Box 1, Folder 2	Business, Contract and Agreement, 1991-2012
Box 1, Folder 3	Business, Loans of Artwork, 2005-2009
Box 1, Folder 4	Business, Photo Release Request from Ginny Vida, 1991
Box 1, Folder 5	Business, Sales Invoice, 1989
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence, General, 1984-2005
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence, Tee A. Corinne, 1990-2007
Box 1, Folder 8	Correspondence, Tirza Latimer Regarding Romaine Brooks, 2000
Box 1, Folder 9	Exhibition, Family Album (1994) Binder, circa 1994
Box 1, Folder 10	Exhibition, Family Album (1994), General, 1994
Box 1, Folder 11	Exhibition, Juried Exhibition Entries and Related Materials, 1985-1996
Box 1, Folder 12	Exhibition, San Francisco Individual Artist Commission Application for SomArts Exhibition, 2000
Box 1, Folder 13	Exhibition, United States of Asian American Festival and National Queer Arts Festival - Exhibition at SomArts, 2001
Box 1, Folder 14	Exhibition, Zellerbach Family Fund Art Grant Application for SomArts Exhibition, 2001
Box 1, Folder 15	Lecture at Dwinelle Hall, 2011

Box 1, Folder 16	Lecture, "Lenore Chinn, Art and Life: from Cezanne to China", 2007
Box 1, Folder 17	Lists, Artwork, 1983-1987
Box 1, Folder 18	Lists, Exhibition Spaces, circa 1987
Box 1, Folder 19	Memberships, Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center, 2005
Box 1, Folder 20	Memberships, Asian American Women Artist Association, 1997-2014
Box 1, Folder 21	Memberships, Lesbian Visual Artists, 1992-2001
Box 1, Folder 22	Memberships, San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Center for Art and Culture, circa 1993
Box 1, Folder 23-24	Professional Activities Binder, 1984-2024

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Series 2: Printed Materials, 1978-2018

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 2-3)

Scope and Contents: Found in printed materials are announcements and catalogs for Chinn's exhibitions, clippings, programs for the Visual and Performing Arts Exchange to China and other events, a scrapbook documenting Chinn's career, and issues of the *San Francisco Bay Times*, *Asian Week*, *MGW*, *San Francisco Sentinel*, *Sphere*, and *Bay Area Reporter* featuring articles on Chinn.

Box 1, Folder 25	Artwork Reproductions, 1986-2012
Box 1, Folder 26	Booklets, 1990-1996
Box 1, Folder 27	Books Featuring Chinn, 1992-2011
Box 1, Folder 28	Clippings, circa 1990
Box 1, Folder 29	Event Programs and Announcements, circa 1990-2014
Box 1, Folder 30	Event Program, Visual and Performing Arts Exchange to China, 2005
Box 1, Folder 31	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, Chinn, 1998-2018
Box 1, Folder 32	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, Other Artists, 1989-2009
Oversize 3	Journals / Newspapers, 1978-2015
Box 1, Folder 33	Miscellaneous Printed Materials, 1989-2009
Oversize 2	Scrapbook, 1980s-1990s
Box 1, Folder 34-35	Scrapbook, Loose Material, circa 1985-2014

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Series 3: Photograph Books, 2015-2023

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: After decades of painting, Chinn turned to photography as her primary medium later in her career. This series contains 6 self-published photography books dating from 2015 to 2023. Chinn's photography documents significant cultural events throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

Box 1, Folder 36	"France 2016" and "Morning in the Tenderloin", 2015-2016 Notes: 2 books
Box 1, Folder 37	"Picturing Kinship: Portraits of Our Community by Lenore Chinn", 2017 Notes: 2 books, duplicates
Box 1, Folder 38	"Alcatraz Indigenous People's Sunrise Ceremony 2017" and "Art Chronicles 2020", 2017-2020 Notes: 2 books
Box 1, Folder 39	"Lenore Chinn at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Bay Area Now 09" and "Chinatown 2021", 2021-2023 Notes: 2 books

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