



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Charles Culver 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:	Charles Culver papers
Identifier:	AAA.culvchar
Date:	1920-1997
Extent:	3.5 Linear feet
Creator:	Culver, Charles B. (Charles Beach), 1908-1967
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of Charles Culver measure 3.5 linear feet and date from 1920-1997. This material documents his personal life and career as a watercolorist and art critic for <i>The Detroit Free Press</i> from the late 1930s-1967. The collection includes biographical material, correspondence, writings, business files, artwork, photographs, printed material and artifacts.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The papers loaned for microfilming by Mrs. Charles Culver in 1969. Sarah C. Weiss, the daughter of Charles Culver, donated most of this material and additional papers to the Archives of American Art in 2004.

Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds microfilm of material lent for microfilming (reels D365-D367, and 3) including correspondence, journals and notebooks, writings, drawings, and a scrapbook. Loaned materials were returned to the lender and while some of these materials were included in subsequent gifts, the items not donated are not described in the collection container inventory.

Available Formats

Materials lent for microfilming are available on 35mm microfilm reels D365-D367, and 3 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Processing Information

The collection was processed to a minimum level and a finding aid prepared by Justin Brancato in June of 2007. The Archives of American Art has implemented minimal processing tactics when possible in order to increase information about and access to more of our collections.

Minimal processing included arrangement to the series, subseries, and folder levels. Generally, items within folders were simply verified with folder titles, but not arranged further. Folders within boxes may not be numbered. The collection was rehoused in archival containers and folders, but not all staples and clips were removed.

Preferred Citation

Charles Culver papers, 1920-1997. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

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Biographical / Historical

Charles Culver (1908-1967) was a Detroit-based watercolorist, critic, and teacher. Culver was very active in the Detroit arts community beginning in the late 1930s. He participated in many solo and group exhibitions in Detroit. His works are in museum collections, including the Detroit Institute of Arts and Whitney Museum in New York. Culver had exhibited in 5 solo exhibitions in New York. He was primarily known for his watercolor paintings of animals, a subject he studied and painted for the remainder of his life. Culver established the Watercolor Department at the Art School of Society of Arts and Crafts, later known as the College for Creative Studies, in Detroit; he taught at the school from 1960 until his death in 1967. In 1966 he became an art critic at the *Detroit Free Press*.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Charles Culver measure 3.5 linear feet and date from 1920-1997. This material documents his career as a watercolorist and art critic for the *Detroit Free Press*. The collection includes biographical materials, correspondence, writings, business files, artwork, photographs, printed material, and artifacts. Correspondence consists of letters exchanged with family and colleagues, including E.P. Richardson, Director of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Arrangement

The Charles Culver papers are organized into 8 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1926-1974 (4 Folders; Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1920-1982, bulk 1920-1966 (1.1 Linear feet; Boxes 1-2, 5)

- Series 3: Writings, circa 1928-1984 (1.1 Linear feet, Boxes 2-3, 5)
- Series 4: Business Files, circa 1967-2000 (4 Folders, Box 3)
- Series 5: Artwork, 1955, undated (0.5 Linear feet; Boxes 3, 5)
- Series 6: Photographs, circa 1923-1952 (8 Folders; Boxes 3, 5)
- Series 7: Artifacts, undated (2 Folders; Box 3)
- Series 8: Printed Material, circa 1930-1977 (0.4 Linear feet; Boxes 3-4)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art, American -- Michigan
Painters -- Michigan -- Detroit
Watercolorists -- Michigan

Names:

Detroit free press
Richardson, Edgar Preston, 1902-1985

Occupations:

Art critics -- Michigan -- Detroit
Art teachers -- Michigan

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1926-1974

4 Folders (Box 1)

English.

Box 1, Folder 1 Curriculum Vitae, Biographical Accounts, 1974, undated
English.

Box 1, Folder 2 Diploma, 1926
English.

Box 1, Folder 3 Obituaries and Memorial Exhibition Clippings, 1967-1968
English.

Box 1, Folder 4 Award of Merit from the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters, 1949
English.

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Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1920-1982 (bulk 1920-1966)

1.1 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2, 5)

English.

Box 1, Folder 5-19	Correspondence, 1920-1966 English.
Box 2, Folder 1-4	Correspondence, 1967-1982 English. Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 1.
Box 2, Folder 5	Condolence Letters, 1967 English.
Box 2, Folder 6	Envelopes, 1982, 1945-1967 English.
Box 5, Folder 1	Oversized Correspondence, undated English. Oversized material from Box 2, Folders 1-4.

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Series 3: Writings, circa 1928-1984

1.1 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3, 5)

English.

Box 2, Folder 7	"American Show", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 8	"Art and the Artist", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 9	"The Artist at Fifty", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 10	"An Artist's Development and Precepts", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 11	"Artists, Poverty and Proposal", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 12	"A Choice of Bridegrooms", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 13	"Coryllia and the Comical Boy", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 14	"Counsels for Watercolorists", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 15	"Culver Joins Arts and Crafts", 1960 English.
Box 2, Folder 16	"Desire of the Dead", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 17	"Dissenting Voice", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 18	"An Evening at the Art Museum", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 19	"Explanatory Narration before a 'Session with Arno Marsh'", 1931 English.

- Box 2, Folder 20 Fictional Dialogue about Vietnam War and Pop Art, undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 21 "Foreword", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 22 "Guest Editorial", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 23 "A Happy Tale", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 24 "I Rebuke Phillip", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 25 "Introduction to Art Study", 1964
English.
- Box 2, Folder 26 "It Happened in Dufferland", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 27 "Johnny Ladyslipperseed", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 28 "A Late Look at the American Scene Movement and its Principle Figures",
undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 29 Lecture Notes, undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 30 Lecture to Students, undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 31 "Memoirs of Ernst Grassdauber", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 32 Miscellaneous Drafts, undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 33 "Michigan Show", undated
English.

- Box 2, Folder 34 "Moments of Heroism", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 35 Music Tablature, undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 36 "My Village", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 37 Note about Death, undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 38 "Notes on the Caricature", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 39 "Notes on Imaginary Invalid Caricature", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 40 "Notes on *Importance of Being Earnest* Caricature", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 41 "Notes on the *Philadelphia Story* Caricatures", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 42 "On the 1947 Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists", 1947
English.
- Box 2, Folder 43 "One Man Show", 1967
English.
- Box 2, Folder 44 "One Man Show", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 45 "One Spring Afternoon", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 46 Puppet Play, undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 47 "Random Suggestions for Art Students", undated
English.
- Box 2, Folder 48 "A Sarkisian Fantasy", undated

English.

Box 2, Folder 49 "Screech Owl Indeed", undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 50 "A Short Introduction to Modern Art", 1954
English.

Box 2, Folder 51 "Some Suggestions for Art Students", undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 52 "A Sorry Tale", undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 53 "Is the State of Michigan Culturally Disposed?", undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 54 "Statement on 1964 Michigan Artists Exhibition", 1964
English.

Box 2, Folder 55 "The Story of Dod and the Troll Who Didn't Want To Be A Troll", undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 56 "The Stuff Lord Clopf Was Made Of", undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 57 "Summer Art Scene", undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 58 "Talk to Art Director's Club", undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 59 "Trib to Ted", undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 60 "Trombley's Garden", undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 61 Untitled, undated
English.

Box 2, Folder 62 Untitled, undated

	English.
Box 2, Folder 63	"Utopia Yet", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 64	"Viewpoint", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 65	"The Village", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 66	"Watercolor Annual", circa 1944 English.
Box 2, Folder 67	"The Way it Went", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 68	"Wicker's", undated English.
Box 2, Folder 69	Various Poems, undated English.
Box 2, Folder 70	Journal, 1939-1967, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 1	Notebooks, Book of Dreams, 1928-1929 English.
Box 3, Folder 2	Notebooks, Poems and Short Prose, circa 1931 English.
Box 3, Folder 3	Notebooks, Poems, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 4	Notebooks, Florence Culver, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 5	Notebooks, On the Laws of Japanese Painting, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 6-7	Notebooks, Misellaneous Notes, undated

	English.
Box 3, Folder 8-9	Writings by Others, <i>The Art of Charles Culver</i> , 1984, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 10	Writings by Others, "Charles Culver" by E.P. Richardson, 1982 English.
Box 3, Folder 11	Writings by Others, "Charles Culver 1908-1967", undated English.
Box 3, Folder 12	Writings by Others, "The Most Unforgettable Critic I Ever New" by Malcolm T. Rybalde, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 13	Writings by Others, "For Art Treasures Worth an Estimated \$40 Billion" by Sara Cauldwell Ambrosini, undated English.
Box 5, Oversize 2	Scrap Book Introductory Note, undated English.

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Series 4: Business Files, circa 1967-2000

4 Folders (Box 3)

English.

Box 3, Folder 14	Inventory, 1975-2000, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 15	Artwork Transactions, 1968-1972, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 16	Correspondence, 1967-1974, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 17	Guest List for Exhibitions, 1968, 1972 English.

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Series 5: Artwork, 1955, undated

0.5 Linear feet (Boxes 3, 5)

English.

Box 3, Folder 18-24	Drawings, 1955, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 25	Prints, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 26	Plant Imprints, undated English.
Box 3, Folder 27	Date Symbols on Culver Paintings, undated English.
Box 5, Folder 3	Oversized Painting on Printed Material, undated
Box 5, Folder 4	Oversized Painted Cartoons, undated
Box 5, Folder 5	Oversized Volkswagen Sunshade Design, 1962

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Series 6: Photographs, circa 1923-1952

8 Folders (Boxes 3, 5)

English.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Box 3, Folder 28-29 | Photographs of Culver, 1926, undated
English.
Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 6-7. |
| Box 3, Folder 30-31 | Photographs of Artwork, circa 1923-1952
English. |
| Box 3, Folder 32 | Various Photographs, undated
English. |
| Box 3, Folder 33 | Transparencies of Artwork, undated
English. |
| Box 5, Folder 6-7 | Oversized Photographs of Culver, 1966, undated
English.
Oversized material from Box 3, Folder 28-29. |

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Series 7: Artifacts, undated

2 Folders (Box 3)

English.

Box 3, Folder 34 Stamp, undated
English.

Box 3, Folder 35 Stone, undated
English.

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Series 8: Printed Material, circa 1930-1977*0.4 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4)*

English.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Box 3, Folder 36-38 | <i>Topic and Talk</i> Newsletter, 1960-1967
English. |
| Box 3, Folder 39 | <i>Topic and Talk</i> Layout, undated
English. |
| Box 3, Folder 40 | Exhibition Announcements, 1947-1993, undated
English. |
| Box 3, Folder 41 | Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, circa 1941-1977 |
| Box 3, Folder 42 | Catalogs, 1930, 1961-1978
English. |
| Box 4, Folder 1 | Miscellaneous Reproductions of Artwork, undated
English. |
| Box 4, Folder 2 | Press Releases, 1991-1993, undated
English. |
| Box 4, Folder 3 | Scrapbook of Culver's Art Reviews, 1966-1967
English. |
| Box 4, Folder 4 | Cartoons by Culver Including a Letter and Drawings, 1997, 1939-1940
English. |
| Box 4, Folder 5 | Mounted Cartoons of Various Writers, undated
English. |
| Box 4, Folder 6 | Reference Clippings, undated
English. |
| Box 4, Folder 7 | <i>In Memoriam Sarkis Sarkisian</i> , 1977
English. |
| Box 4, Folder 8 | <i>The Detroit Institute of Arts, Sixty Years in Review</i> , 1945
English. |

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