



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Boris Deutsch papers, circa 1912-1979, in the Archives of American Art

Allessandra Liberati

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Boris Deutsch papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1912-1979
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.deutbori
<b>Creator:</b>	Deutsch, Boris, 1892 or 5-1978
<b>Extent:</b>	3.1 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	The collection is in English and Yiddish.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of Boris Deutsch measure 3.1 linear feet and date from circa 1912-1979. Deutsch's career as a modernist painter is documented through biographical materials, correspondence, writings, personal business records, printed and photographic material, and artwork.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Clippings and exhibition catalogs were lent for microfilming in 1964 by Betty Hoag. Papers were donated in 1980 by the estate of Boris Deutsch.

### Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds microfilm of material lent for microfilming (reel LA 2) including: clippings and exhibition catalogs.

### Related Materials

The archives also hold an oral history interview of Boris Deutsch conducted 1964 June 1-5, by Betty Hoag, for the Archives of American Art.

### Available Formats

Material lent for microfilming is available on 35mm microfilm reel(s) LA 2 at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

### Processing Information

This collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared, by Alessandra Liberati in 2023.

### Preferred Citation

Boris Deutsch papers, circa 1912-1979 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.

## Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Boris Deutsch (1892–1978) was a muralist and painter who worked primarily in Los Angeles, California. He was born to a Jewish family in Krasnogorka shtetl, then part of the Russian Empire. Deutsch is known for his work in modernist paintings which were heavily influenced by German expressionism, portraits, and printmaking with a focus on monotypes and lithography.

Deutsch obtained his education at the Bloom Academy of Fine Arts in Riga and completed post graduate work in Berlin, Germany. At the start of World War One, he was drafted into the Russian army and his mother helped him falsify identification documents and desert. After deserting the Russian Army, Deutsch went first to Harbin in China and then Japan. In 1916 he immigrated to the United States landing in Seattle before relocating to Los Angeles. There he joined the Art Student's League and worked for Paramount Pictures in the special effects department. While in Los Angeles Deutsch also taught at the Otis Art Institute for six years. In the years following 1924 Deutsch organized his first solo exhibitions and became highly regarded as a portraitist alongside his other artworks. In 1929 he decorated the interior of the Floridian Hotel in Miami Beach and during the 1930s he won many of the prizes earned over his career. During the Great Depression Deutsch was employed by the Federal Arts Program designing murals for post offices across California and New Mexico. Among his commissions sponsored by the New Deal project was the Terminal Annex Post Office in Los Angeles. In 1946 he won the Pepsi-Cola art competition with his work *What Atomic War Will Do to You*. Deutsch is also known for his role in directing the fifteen-minute experimental and expressionist film *Lullaby* starring Michael Visaroff in 1929. Deutsch died on January 16, 1978, in Los Angeles.

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## Scope and Contents

The Boris Deutsch papers measure 3.1 linear feet and date from circa 1912-1979. Biographical materials include a resume, identification documents, an interview transcript, and documentation of milestone dates. Correspondence with Deutsch is both personal and professional. Writings includes both autobiographical and biographical writings as well as various speeches and notes. Personal business records consists of business documents, inventories of artwork, and stock market documents created by Deutsch. Printed materials includes various materials relating to the political climate of the 1940s and Deutsch's personal interests, as well as auction and exhibition catalogs, and exhibition announcements. Also included are scans of photographs and scrapbook pages. Photographic material consists of photographs of Deutsch and his wife, family and friends, his artwork, and various installations of exhibits. Artwork includes one sketchbook.

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## Arrangement

This collection consists of seven series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1924-1949 (.1 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1924-1979 (.2 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 3: Writings, circa 1940-1972 (.2 Linear feet: Box 1)

- Series 4: Personal Business Records , circa 1926-1975 (.3 Linear feet: Box 1)
  - Series 5: Printed Material, circa 1921-1976 (1 Linear foot: Boxes 1 and 2)
  - Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1912-1972 (1.2 Linear feet: Boxes 2-5)
  - Series 7: Artwork, circa 1930 (.1 Linear feet: Box 4)
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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:

Mural painting and decoration -- 20th century -- United States

Names:

United States. Public Buildings Administration. Section of Fine Arts

Occupations:

Painters -- California -- Los Angeles

Functions:

Post office buildings -- California -- Los Angeles

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1924-1949

#### *.1 Linear feet (Box 1)*

Scope and Contents: Biographical material includes Deutsch's resume, various identification cards and certificates, the transcript of an interview titled "Government Speaks", and a record of the dates of Deutsch's marriage and citizenship certificate.

Box 1, Folder 1            Resume, circa 1926-1946

Box 1, Folder 2            Driver's License, 1928, Mar. 1

Box 1, Folder 3            American Federation of Government Employees Card, circa 1935

Box 1, Folder 4            "Government Speaks", Interview with Boris Deutsch by Richard Flu, arranged by Joe Micchiche , 1948, Sept. 25

Box 1, Folder 5            Marriage Record and Citizenship Papers Dates, circa 1924-1931

Box 1, Folder 6            Certificate Of Naturalization, Fay Segal, 1941, Feb. 14

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## Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1924-1979

### .2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence includes letters to and from Deutsch regarding professional and personal matters, as well as letters from family in Yiddish, content related to the American Fund for Palestinian Institutions, and letters to and from the Resettlement Administration in Washington.

Box 1, Folder 7	General (1930s), circa 1930-1939
Box 1, Folder 8	General (1940s), circa 1940-1949
Box 1, Folder 9	General (1950s), circa 1950-1959
Box 1, Folder 10	General (1960s), circa 1962-1967
Box 1, Folder 11	General (1970s), circa 1972-1977
Box 1, Folder 12	General (undated), circa 1930-1979
Box 1, Folder 13	Family Correspondence in Yiddish, circa 1924-1926
Box 1, Folder 14	American Fund for Palestinian Institutions, circa 1948
Box 1, Folder 15	Eonite Picture Preservative, circa 1949
Box 1, Folder 16	Hallmark Art Award Rejection, circa 1949
Box 1, Folder 17	Resettlement Administration, Washington , circa 1936-1937
Box 1, Folder 18	State of California Department of Education, Division of Readjustment Education , circa 1947-1948
Box 1, Folder 19	Westside Jewish Community Center , circa 1956-1972
Box 1, Folder 20	Get Well Soon Cards, circa 1959
Box 1, Folder 21	Christmas Cards, circa 1952-1958

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## Series 3: Writings, circa 1940-1972

### .2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Writings includes autobiographical and biographical writings, speeches written by Deutsch for various events, a copy of *Murals on Pan-Americanism* by Peter Nihill, and miscellaneous writings by others about Deutsch.

Box 1, Folder 22	Autobiographical Writings, circa 1946
	Speeches
Box 1, Folder 23	Hebrew University in Palestine, circa 1940
Box 1, Folder 24	Religion and Philosophy in Art, circa 1945
Box 1, Folder 25	Representational Art , 1945, Sept. 12
Box 1, Folder 26	Miscellaneous, circa 1946
Box 1, Folder 27	Paint Recipes, circa 1940-1972
Box 1, Folder 28	Murals on Pan-Americanism by Peter Nihill, Illustrations by Boris Deutsch, circa 1940
Box 1, Folder 29	Biographical Writings by Others , circa 1940-1972

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## Series 4: Personal Business Records , circa 1926-1975

### *.3 Linear feet (Box 1)*

Scope and Contents: Personal business records includes storage and shipping receipts for oil paintings, documents regarding Deutsch's time employed by the Federal Works Agency, inventories of his artwork, stock commodity receipts, and hand made stock charts.

Box 1, Folder 30	Brugger Transfer and Storage Company , circa 1948
Box 1, Folder 31	Federal Works Agency Public Building Administration Section of Fine Arts, Mural, circa 1940-1941
Box 1, Folder 32	Inventory of Artwork, circa 1926-1960
Box 1, Folder 33	Stock Commodity Statements, circa 1969
Box 1, Folder 34-37	Stock Market Charts, circa 1956-1975

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## Series 5: Printed Material, circa 1921-1976

### 1 Linear foot (Boxes 1 and 2)

Scope and Contents: Printed material includes documents relating to the political climate of the 1940s including a pamphlet for a speech given by Chet Holifield a representative from California, and a copy of the text for the proposed "Constitution for the State of Israel" in 1948. Also included are auction and exhibition catalogs, exhibition announcements, scrapbook pages, and scans of photographs.

Box 1, Folder 38	"The Atlantic Charter, The Moscow Declaration, and Statement on Atrocities" as offered by T. B. Blakiston, circa 1941
Box 1, Folder 39	Israel Independence Day, Yom Hakomemiut, circa 1949
Box 1, Folder 40	Los Angeles Chapter of Hadassah, Yearbook, circa 1949-1950
Box 1, Folder 41	"Marshall Plan Imperative - United Nations Must Be Strengthened", speech of Honorable Chet Holifield, 1948, Mar. 25
Box 1, Folder 42	Pepsi-Cola, "Paintings of the Year", circa 1946
Box 1, Folder 43	Text of Proposed Constitution for State of Israel, 1948, Dec. 10
Box 1, Folder 44	Volume 3 of Southwest Jewry edited by Joseph L. Malamut, circa 1957
	Auction Catalogs
Box 1, Folder 45	Ernest Raboff Gallery, circa 1965
Box 1, Folder 46	Warner Playhouse Theatre, circa 1965
Box 2, Folder 1	Exhibition Announcements, circa 1946-1970
Box 2, Folder 2-6	Exhibition Catalogs, circa 1926-1976
Box 2, Folder 7-12	Newspaper Clippings, circa 1929-1959
Box 2, Folder 13	Magazine Articles, circa 1930-1972
Box 2, Folder 14-16	Scrapbook Pages, circa 1921-1946
Box 2, Folder 17	Scrapbook Pages, copies, circa 1921-1946
Box 2, Folder 18	Scans of Photographs, People, circa 1925-1945
Box 2, Folder 19	Scans of Photographs, Artwork, circa 1925-1945
Box 2, Folder 20	Miscellaneous Booklets, circa 1924-1953

Box 2, Folder 21

Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1934-1963

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## Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1912-1972

### 1.2 Linear feet (Boxes 2-5)

Scope and Contents: Photographic material consists of photographs of Boris Deutsch, his wife Riva Deutsch, personal photographs of family and friends, exhibit installations, and photographs of his artwork.

Box 2, Folder 22-26	Boris Deutsch, circa 1912-1972
Box 5, Folder 1-2	Boris Deutsch, circa 1912-1972
Box 3, Folder 1-3	Riva Deutsch, circa 1912-1972
Box 3, Folder 4	Boris and Riva Deutsch, circa 1912-1972
Box 3, Folder 5	Personal , circa 1912-1972
Box 3, Folder 6	Exhibition Installations, circa 1931-1948
Box 3, Folder 7-10	Photographs of Artwork, circa 1920-1972
Box 4, Folder 1-6	Photographs of Artwork, circa 1920-1972
Box 5, Folder 3-4	Photographs of Artwork, circa 1920-1972

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## Series 7: Artwork, circa 1934

### *.1 Linear feet (Box 4)*

Scope and Contents: Artwork includes a sketchbook from circa 1934.

Contents:

Box 4, Folder 7

Sketchbook, circa 1934

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