



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Selected Federal Art Project of the Work
Projects Administration records from the
United States National Archives (microfilm)

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Selected Federal Art Project of the Work Projects Administration records from the United States National Archives (microfilm)
Identifier:	AAA.fedeartp09
Date:	1935-1948
Extent:	70 Microfilm reels
Creator:	Federal Art Project (U.S.)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Series and files microfilmed by AAA were selected from the National Archives record group 69, records of the Work Projects Administration. Additional records of the WPA are preserved at the National Archives. FAP series and files not microfilmed by AAA include: additional records of the Federal Art Project (FAP), National Archives boxes, 27-58 and records of the FAP in Ohio, ca. 1937-1940; Division of Information, "Primary File" of the FAP and National Art Week; and photographic prints and negatives in the Still Picture Division, National Archives Building.

Location of Originals

Originals in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.; record group 69.

Available Formats

35mm microfilm reels DC44-DC111 & DC129-DC130 are available for use at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Restrictions

The Archives does not own the original records. Use is limited to microfilm copy.

Biographical / Historical

The Federal Art Project (FAP) fell under the jurisdiction of Federal Project No. 1 of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to aid unemployed artists, following the precedent set by the Public Works of Art Project and other Treasury department art relief projects. Holger Cahill was appointed director of the FAP and remained in that position throughout its existence. The WPA was established in May 1935 specifically as a work relief program for the millions of individuals left unemployed during the Depression. Its name

changed to the Work Projects Administration in 1939 when it fell under the administrative hand of the newly created Federal Works Agency.

Biographical / Historical

The FAP projects included a broad range of events and activities which generated the various publications and materials found in the central files of the general subject series. ART FOR THE MILLIONS was a publication project about the accomplishments of the FAP consisting of a series of articles by Project workers. In addition to creating work for artists, the FAP sought to increase art appreciation as well as art sales among the general public. In doing so it devised a plan which created National Art Week. National Art Week was observed in both 1940 and 1941, and although the scale was grand and participation by the public impressive, the financial return on both occasions was minute, putting an end to plans for future National Art Weeks.

Scope and Contents

Selected records from the United States National Archives and Records Administration of the Federal Art Project (FAP) of the Work Projects Administration. Records cover a broad range of topics. The bulk are from the Central Files, "States" and "General Subject" series, 1935-1944. Also microfilmed are materials from series Federal Art Project, Federal Project #1, WPA, among them records related to the Index of American Design; and records of the Chicago Field Finance office relating to allocations of works of art.

Scope and Contents

General Subject Files is comprised of correspondence, memoranda, receipts, reports, and business files. Found on reels DC44-DC49 are correspondence and memoranda of the the FAP; materials relating to Art for the Millions published during the WPA; receipts for loans of works of art.and other correspondence, memoranda, business records, reports, and lists of artists. Found on reels. DC45, and DC49-DC50 are materials relating to the two National Art Weeks of 1940 and 1941; regional correspondence, 1939; reports, 1939; and papers relating to exhibitions held for WPA artists.

Scope and Contents

Central Files, "States", on reels DC62-DC111, is comprised of general correspondence, memoranda, telegrams, reports, and records of FAP activities at the state level. Much of the material is between state administrators and national directors. There are occasional occurrences of letters from individual citizens seeking assistance. Topics covered include FAP, Federal Writers' Project, Federal Theater Project, Federal Music Project, Index of American Design, and other projects under Federal Project # 1 of the WPA. New York City has its own separate file.

Scope and Contents

Federal Art Project, Federal Art Project #1, series appears on reels DC51-DC61 are broken down into "General Correspondence File", reels DC51-DC59, consisting of ca. 80 files with a variety of titles, for example Artist's oil paints, Congressional correspondence, Index of American Design (mostly reel DC53), Museum of Modern Art, News releases, Salary increases, etc.; and "Regional Correspondence Files," reels DC60-DC61, for Ohio, Washington state, and California; publicity and exhibition material; and "Regional and State Correspondence Files," Alabama to Michigan. Among the persons represented are Holger Cahill, Lawrence Morris, Thomas C. Parker, Russell C. Parr, and Constance Rourke.

Scope and Contents

Chicago Field Finance office records relating to allocations of works of art are found on reels DC129-DC130 and include requests for allocations of funds, requests for loans, receipts for allocations of works of art, shipping receipts, miscellaneous forms and correspondence.

Arrangement

Microfilm reels DC44-50: General Subject Files. Reels DC51-61: Federal Art Project, Federal Project #1, WPA. Reels DC62-DC111: Central Files: "States" (reel DC53 is exclusively related to the Index of American Design). DC129-DC130: Chicago Field Finance office records relating to allocations of works of art. Most series are arranged alphabetically by subject, artist, state, territory, and district. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the records on microfilm reflects the order and arrangement as existed during the microfilming project, 1964-1966, and may not correspond to the original order of the records currently maintained by the National Archives in Record group 69,

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art and state -- United States
- Federal aid to public welfare
- Federal aid to the arts
- New Deal, 1933-1939

Names:

- Cahill, Holger, 1887-1960
- Federal Art Project. National Art Week
- Federal Music Project (U.S.)
- Federal Theatre Project (U.S.)
- Federal Writers' Project (U.S.)
- Index of American Design
- Rourke, Constance, 1885-1941
- United States. Work Projects Administration

United States. Works Progress Administration

Geographic Names:

United States -- Economic conditions -- 1918-1945

United States -- Social conditions -- 1935-1945

Container Listing

Microfilm reels DC44-50: General Subject Files. , 1935-1948

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Reels DC51-61: Federal Art Project, Federal Project #1, WPA, 1935-1948

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Reels DC62-DC111: Central Files: "States" (reel DC53 is exclusively related to the Index of American Design).

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Reels DC62-DC111: Central Files: "States" (reel DC53 is exclusively related to the Index of American Design). , 1935-1948

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DC129-DC130: Chicago Field Finance office records relating to allocations of works of art.

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DC129-DC130: Chicago Field Finance office records relating to allocations of works of art., 1935-1948

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