



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the George Fedoroff Papers, 1939-1980, in the Archives of American Art

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | George Fedoroff papers |
| Date: | 1939-1980 |
| Identifier: | AAA.fedogeor |
| Creator: | Fedoroff, George |
| Extent: | 2 Linear feet |
| Language: | English . |
| Summary: | The papers of craftsman and administrator George Fedoroff measure 2.0 linear feet and date from 1939-1980. Found are biographical materials, correspondence, writings and notes, professional files, printed materials, and photographs. Many of the documents concern Fedoroff's work with the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs. |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

George Fedoroff donated his papers to the Archives of American Art in 1980 and 1981.

Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with George Fedoroff conducted by Robert F. Brown, 1980 July 8-1981 January 21.

Available Formats

Portions of the collection are available on 35mm microfilm reels 3958-3959, 1813 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2019.

Preferred Citation

George Fedoroff papers, 1939-1980. 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.

Biographical / Historical

George Fedoroff (1907-2001) was a Russian-American craftsman and arts administrator who worked with the United States Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs in Alaska.

Born to an upper-middle class family in Gatchina, Russia in 1907, George Fedoroff enjoyed a comfortable childhood. In 1917, he and his family fled Russia during the revolution through Siberia to China. He settled in Paris where he studied the decorative arts at L'Ecole des Arts Appliques a L'Industrie. He left for the United States in 1928 without the financial support of his wealthy relatives and worked as a stage designer for the University Players in Falmouth, Massachusetts.

After serving in the United States Army during World War II, Fedoroff became a naturalized citizen and worked for the Department of the Interior as an arts administrator for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He served in Sitka, Alaska and started an arts and crafts school at the Mt. Edgecumbe School. Additionally, he served on the Indian Arts and Crafts Board of Alaska. Later in life Fedoroff concentrated on his own craft and sculpted.

George Fedoroff married Margaret Beard with whom he had two children. He retired to the east coast where he died in 2001.

Scope and Contents

The papers of craftsman and administrator George Fedoroff measure 2.0 linear feet and date from 1939-1980. Found are biographical materials, correspondence, writings and notes, professional files, printed materials, and photographs. Many of the documents concern Fedoroff's work with the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Biographical materials include an autobiographical sketch detailing Fedoroff's childhood, escape from Russia during the revolution, and settlement in the United States. Correspondence is with family, friends, the United States government, institutions, museums, and galleries. Earlier correspondence concerns Fedoroff's work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the U.S. Department of the Interior while later correspondence details his own work as a craftsman and the exhibition and sale of his works. Writings are by Fedoroff and others including Katherine Kuh, Jean Chretien, and George Elliot. Professional files are scattered and include a list of courses, conference and meeting materials, and reports. Photographs are of Fedoroff, others, Alaska Native craftsmen, and of works of art.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1939-1980 (Box 1; 4 folders)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1945-1979 (Box 1; 0.8 linear feet)
- Series 3: Writings and Notes, 1946-1973 (Box 1; 6 folders)
- Series 4: Professional Files, 1947-1976 (Box 1-2; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 5: Printed Material, 1944-1977 (Box 2; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 6: Photographs, circa 1940-circa 1960 (0.2 linear feet; Box 2)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Artisans
Indian art -- North America

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1939-1980

4 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Found is an autobiographical sketch in which Fedoroff details his childhood, escape during the Russian Revolution, arrival in Paris and the United States, and his career. A sketchbook depicts stage design ideas and dates from 1939. Also found are scattered personal business records and materials regarding Fedoroff's memberships.

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| Box 1, Folder 1 | Autobiographical Sketch, 1980 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Membership Material, 1960s |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Personal Business Records, circa 1960s |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Sketchbook, Stage Design, 1939 |

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1945-1979

0.8 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: George Fedoroff's correspondence contains letters from friend and family members. The bulk of the letters are professional in nature and concern Alaska Native craftsmen and artwork. Many letters are from the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs in the 1940s and early 1950s. Later correspondence concerns Fedoroff's own artwork and carvings.

Correspondents include Robert O. Bentley, the Henry Gallery, Katherine Kuh, Lee Nordness, Stuart Art Gallery, Patricia and George Strauss, William Tatsuda, United States Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, and Bretaigne Windust. Letters from family members include a letter from Fedoroff's father and his wife and children.

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| Box 1, Folder 5 | Correspondence, 1945 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Correspondence, 1946 |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Correspondence, 1947 |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Correspondence, 1948 |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Correspondence, 1949 |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | Correspondence, 1950 |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | Correspondence, 1951 |
| Box 1, Folder 12 | Correspondence, 1952 |
| Box 1, Folder 13 | Correspondence, 1953 |
| Box 1, Folder 14 | Correspondence, 1954 |
| Box 1, Folder 15 | Correspondence, 1955 |
| Box 1, Folder 16 | Correspondence, 1956 |
| Box 1, Folder 17 | Correspondence, 1957 |
| Box 1, Folder 18 | Correspondence, 1958 |
| Box 1, Folder 19 | Correspondence, 1959 |
| Box 1, Folder 20 | Correspondence, 1960 |
| Box 1, Folder 21 | Correspondence, 1961 |
| Box 1, Folder 22 | Correspondence, 1962 |

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| Box 1, Folder 23 | Correspondence, 1963 |
| Box 1, Folder 24 | Correspondence, 1964 |
| Box 1, Folder 25 | Correspondence, 1965 |
| Box 1, Folder 26 | Correspondence, 1966 |
| Box 1, Folder 27 | Correspondence, 1967 |
| Box 1, Folder 28 | Correspondence, 1968 |
| Box 1, Folder 29 | Correspondence, 1969 |
| Box 1, Folder 30 | Correspondence, 1970 |
| Box 1, Folder 31 | Correspondence, 1971 |
| Box 1, Folder 32 | Correspondence, 1972 |
| Box 1, Folder 33 | Correspondence, 1973 |
| Box 1, Folder 34 | Correspondence, 1974 |
| Box 1, Folder 35 | Correspondence, 1975 |
| Box 1, Folder 36 | Correspondence, 1976 |
| Box 1, Folder 37 | Correspondence, 1977 |
| Box 1, Folder 38 | Correspondence, 1978 |
| Box 1, Folder 39 | Correspondence, 1979 |
| Box 1, Folder 40 | Correspondence, circa 1945-circa 1979 |

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Series 3: Writings and Notes, 1946-1973

6 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Scattered writings are by Fedoroff and others including Jean Chretien, George Elliot, and Katherine Kuh. A piece by Fedoroff entitled "Arts and Crafts as a Profession" is a defense of the Mt. Edgecumbe School in Edgecumbe, Alaska for the support of Alaska Native craftsmen.

Box 1, Folder 41 "Arts and Crafts as a Profession," by George Fedoroff, 1947

Box 1, Folder 42 Lists, circa 1960s

Box 1, Folder 43 Notes and Empty Envelopes, circa 1960s-circa 1970s

Box 1, Folder 44 "Preservation of Indian Art in Southeastern Alaska," by Katherine Kuh, 1946

Box 1, Folder 45 Address, by Jean Chretien to the Conference on the Fine Arts of the Arctic, 1973 May 18

Box 1, Folder 46 Forward, Eskimo Masterworks Exhibition Catalog, by George Elliot, circa 1960

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Series 4: Professional Files, 1947-1976

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents: This series contains meeting minutes, conference materials, proposals, and drafts of reports from various organizations and programs with which George Fedoroff worked. A teaching file contains course lists for the Mt. Edgecumbe School's arts and crafts classes.

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| Box 1, Folder 47 | Teaching File, 1947 |
| Box 1, Folder 48 | Conference Materials, 1973 |
| Box 2, Folder 1 | Meetings, Minutes, 1976 |
| Box 2, Folder 2-5 | Proposals, 1970-1973 |
| Box 2, Folder 6-8 | Report, 1949-circa 1970s |

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Series 5: Printed Material, 1944-1977

0.5 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: The bulk of printed materials concern art, crafts, and Alaska and include brochures, clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, newsletters, and circulars. Found are copies of *Smoke Signals*, the circular published by the United States Department of the Interior, Indian Arts and Crafts Board.

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| Box 2, Folder 9-10 | on Alaska, 1955-1961 |
| Box 2, Folder 11 | on Art, 1970a |
| Box 2, Folder 12 | Brochures, 1960s |
| Box 2, Folder 13-14 | Clippings, 1940s-1970s |
| Box 2, Folder 15-18 | Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1940s-1970s |
| Box 2, Folder 19 | Newsletters and Bulletins, 1949-1977 |
| Box 2, Folder 20 | Press Releases, 1960-1973 |
| Box 2, Folder 21 | Smoke Signals Circular, 1954-1966 |
| Box 2, Folder 22 | on Wood Preservation, 1944 |

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Series 6: Photographs, circa 1940-circa 1960

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Fedoroff's personal photographs include portraits, snapshots of Fedoroff with others including Senator Ted Stevens, his workshop, and his homes. Also found are photographs of Alaska Native craftsmen at work carving totems and other pieces at the Mt. Edgecumbe School, Edgecumbe, Alaska; Sitka, Alaska, and Mekoryuk Village, on Nunivak Island, Alaska.

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| Box 2, Folder 23 | George Fedoroff Personal Photographs, 1940s-1960s |
| Box 2, Folder 24 | Alaska Native Artists and Craftsmen, 1940s-1950s |
| Box 2, Folder 25-29 | Works of Art, 1940s-1960s |
| Box 2, Folder 30 | Slides, circa 1960s |

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