



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Frank and Eleanor Freed papers, 1923-1992, bulk 1943-1975, in the Archives of American Art

Sabine Lipten

The processing of this collection received Federal support from the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund, administered by the National Collections Program and the Smithsonian Collections Advisory Committee.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Frank and Eleanor Freed papers
<b>Date:</b>	1923-1992 (bulk 1943-1975)
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.freefran
<b>Creator:</b>	Freed, Frank, 1906-1975 Freed, Eleanor, 1914-1992
<b>Extent:</b>	2.9 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The Frank and Eleanor Freed papers measure 2.9 linear feet and date from 1923-1992 with bulk dates from 1943-1975. The papers document Frank Freed's career through biographical material, printed material, and artwork. Both Freeds are documented through writings and printed material.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Material on reels 3432-3433 lent for microfilming 1985, by Frank and Eleanor Freed as part of the Archives of American Art's Texas project. The remainder was donated by the Freeds, 1978-1985, and by Eleanor Freed Stern's estate, 1993. The estate bequest included the guestbooks which were part of the 1985 loan.

### Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds microfilm of material lent for microfilming (reels 432-3433, 3538) including 3 scrapbooks containing clippings regarding a trial on which Frank was a juror and *Mexican Painting and Drawing*, a show curated by Frank; articles written by Eleanor as art critic for the Houston Post, 1965-1973; and an article written for Texas Humanist, 1984, *Dominique de Menil: Rare Visions in the Arts*, outlining the collecting philosophy of Menil and the establishment of a private museum to exhibit the collection; source material for paintings; a guestbook from an exhibition at Instituto Mexicanos Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales; and sketches. Loaned materials were returned to the lender and are not described in the collection container inventory.

### Available Formats

Portions of the collection and material lent for microfilming are available on 35mm microfilm reels 2812, 3432-3433, 3448 and 3538 through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of 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 Sabine Lipten in 2023.

## Preferred Citation

Frank and Eleanor Freed papers, 1923-1992. 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Frank Freed was a self taught painter, cartoonist and writer. His wife, Eleanor (1914-1992) was an art critic for The Houston Post and an active member in the arts and culture sector of Houston, Texas where the couple lived. Born in San Antonio, Texas, Freed and his family moved to Houston in 1913, where Freed drew cartoons for his high school yearbook and the *Rice Owl*, the campus humor magazine, during a year of study at Rice University. Ultimately, Freed graduated from Harvard in 1927 with a degree in English Literature. After graduation he published several articles and began a forty-two-year career as a life-insurance salesman. He enlisted in the United States Army in 1943 and from 1944 to 1946 served in Normandy with the United States Corps of Engineers. In 1948 Freed began to paint and in 1949 he was included in two group shows in Houston galleries and then participated in annual group shows of Houston artists sponsored by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in 1950–1952 and 1958–1959. Freed went on to participate in numerous group and solo exhibitions in the United States and abroad, including a 1970 solo show in Mexico City. Freed's work can be found in the collections of the Museum of Fine Art, Houston; the Marion Koogler McNay Art Museum in San Antonio; and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin.

In addition to her career as an art critic Eleanor Freed served as member and subsequent president of the Friends of the Houston Public Library organization, and then later served on the Houston Public Library Board. In her will, Eleanor left a bequest to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston for a lecture series and renovation funding to the museum's Glassell School of Art, which contains the Eleanor and Frank Freed Auditorium and Image Library.

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## Scope and Contents

The Frank and Eleanor Freed papers measure 2.9 linear feet and date from 1923-1992 with bulk dates from 1943-1975. The papers document Frank Freed's career through biographical material, printed material, and artwork. Both Freeds are documented through writings and printed material. Biographical material includes Frank Freed's resumes, a tv documentary interview video and related audio tape and correspondence from friends congratulating Freed on the TV special. Also found is a Museum of Fine Arts, Houston reel-to-reel panel discussion: *The Fine Arts from Various Points of View*, and a home video of friends remembering and celebrating Freed on what would have been his 80th birthday. Writings contains essays by Frank Freed on war along with essays and memorial speeches about Freed and writings by Eleanor Freed on artist and professor Donald J. Weismann. The series also contains thirteen guest books from the Freed's home, signed by visitors often with accompanying drawings. Printed material includes clippings by and about Frank Freed including articles written under Freed's pseudonym "Caliph McFloe", along with copies of student cartoons Freed drew for Rice University's student humor magazine the *Rice Owl*. Also

found are exhibition catalogs and announcements and newsletters written by Eleanor Freed. Photographic material contains over two hundred photographs of Freed's paintings, along with portraits of Frank Freed and photographs of the filming of the channel KUHT 8 TV documentary on Freed, depicting Frank, Eleanor and Freed's studio. Also found are two hundred and thirteen slides of Freed's artwork. Artwork consists of four of Freed's sketchbooks along with four loose large charcoal drawings.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as five series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1950-1986 (0.5 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 2: Writings, 1943-1992 (1 Linear foot Box: 1-2)
- Series 3: Printed Material, 1923-1984 (0.7 Linear feet: Box 2-3, OV 1-2)
- Series 4: Photographic Material, 1958-1989 (0.3 Linear feet: Box 3-4)
- Series 5: Artwork, 1948-1975 (0.2 Linear feet: Box 4, OV 3)

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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:

Caricatures and cartoons  
Painting, Modern -- 20th century -- Texas -- Houston  
Women art critics

Types of Materials:

Sketchbooks  
Video recordings

Occupations:

Art critics -- Texas -- Houston  
Cartoonists -- Texas -- Houston  
Painters -- Texas -- Houston

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1950-1986

#### 0.5 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material contains Frank Freed's resumes, a tv documentary interview video and related audio tape and correspondence from friends congratulating Freed on the TV special. Also found is a Museum of Fine Arts, Houston reel-to-reel panel discussion: *The Fine Arts from Various Points of View*, and a home video of friends remembering and celebrating Freed on what would have been his 80th birthday.

Box 1, Folder 1	Frank Freed Resumes, circa 1981
Box 1, Folder 2-3	Frank Freed Interview by Peter Guenther, Channel KUHT 8 TV, Digital Video Recording, 1975 2 Videocassettes (U-matic)
Box 1, Folder 4	Channel KUHT 8 TV Documentary Sound Recording, circa 1975 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 5	Channel KUHT 8 TV Documentary Correspondence, 1974
Box 1, Folder 6	The Fine Arts from Various Points of View Panel, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston , 1970 2 Sound tape reels
Box 1, Folder 7	Frank Freed: A Gathering of Some Friends on His 80th Birthday, February, 86, Digital Video Recording, 1986 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
Box 1, Folder 8	Eleanor and Frank Freed Wedding Invitation, 1950
Box 1, Folder 9	American Jewish Committee Distinguished Leader Certificate, 1980

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## Series 2: Writings, 1943-1992

### 1 Linear foot (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents: The Writings series contains essays by Frank Freed on war along with essays and memorial speeches about Freed and writings by Elanor Freed on artist and professor Donald J. Weismann. The series also contains thirteen guest books from the Freed's home, signed by visitors often with accompanying drawings.

Box 1, Folder 10	Echo of Agincourt Essay by Frank Freed, circa 1943-1975
Box 1, Folder 11	Act of Violence Essay by Frank Freed, circa 1943-1975
Box 1, Folder 12	Reservations in Eden Play Excerpt by Freed, circa 1943-1975
Box 1, Folder 13	On the Book of Ezekiel, circa 1943-1975
Box 1, Folder 14	Channel KUHT 8 TV Documentary Informational Notes, circa 1974
Box 1, Folder 15	Essay on Frank Freed by Donald J. Weismann, circa 1970
Box 1, Folder 16	Frank Freed Memorial Speeches, 1975
Box 1, Folder 17	Art: Probing The Process Essay on Donald L. Weismann by Eleanor Freed, circa 1970
Box 1, Folder 18	Newsletters from Eleanor Freed, circa 1973
Box 1, Folder 19	Freed Home Guestbooks, 1957-1964
Box 1, Folder 20	Freed Home Guestbooks, 1964-1969
Box 1, Folder 21	Freed Home Guestbooks, 1967-1971
Box 1, Folder 22	Freed Home Guestbooks, 1971-1974
Box 2, Folder 1	Freed Home Guestbooks, 1974-1981
Box 2, Folder 2	Freed Home Guestbooks, 1979-1983
Box 2, Folder 3	Freed Home Guestbooks, 1981-1984
Box 2, Folder 4	Freed Home Guestbooks, 1984-1985
Box 2, Folder 5	Freed Home Guestbooks, 1985-1986
Box 2, Folder 6	Freed Home Guestbooks, 1986-1988

Box 2, Folder 7      Freed Home Guestbooks, 1988-1989

Box 2, Folder 8      Freed Home Guestbooks, 1989-1991

Box 2, Folder 9      Freed Home Guestbooks, 1991-1992

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## Series 3: Printed Material, 1923-1984

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

Scope and Contents: Printed Material includes clippings by and about Frank Freed including articles written under Freed's pseudonym "Caliph McFloe", along with copies of student cartoons Freed drew for Rice University's student humor magazing the *Rice Owl*. Also found are exhibition catalogs and announcements.

Box 2, Folder 10	Frank Freed Illustrated Alley Theater Bill, 1974
Box 2, Folder 11-13	Frank Freed Illustrated Cards, circa 1955-1977
Box 2, Folder 14	Exhibition Announcements and Invitations, 1964-1983
Box 2, Folder 15-19	Exhibition Catalogs, 1952-1984
Oversize 5, Folder 1	Fire! An Exhibition of 100 Texas Artists (Feb. 16 - Apr. 115, 1979), Exhibition Catalog, 1979
Box 3, Folder 1-2	Clippings, 1950-1984
Box 3, Folder 3	Magazine Articles by Frank Freed and Caliph McFloe, Freed's Pseudonym, circa 1936, 1972
Oversize 6, Folder 1	The Texas Humanist Magazine, Vol 6, No. 3, 1984
Box 3, Folder 4	Frank Freed Obituaries, 1975
Box 3, Folder 5	Frank Freed Memorial Invitation, 1975
Box 3, Folder 6	Copies of Student Cartoons, 1923-1924
Box 3, Folder 7	Donald L. Weismann, 1970
Box 3, Folder 8	Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1957-1980

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## Series 4: Photographic Material, 1958-1989

### 0.3 Linear feet (Box 3-4)

Scope and Contents: Photographic material contains over two hundred photographs of Freed's paintings, along with portraits of Frank Freed and photographs of the filming of the KUHT TV documentary on Freed. Also found are two hundred and thirteen slides of Freed's artwork.

Box 3, Folder 9	Portraits of Frank Freed, circa 1975
Box 3, Folder 10	Photographs and Contact Sheets from Channel KUHT 8 TV Documentary, 1975
Box 3, Folder 11	Photographs, Artwork Titles: A-C, circa 1958-1975
Box 3, Folder 12	Photographs, Artwork Titles: D-F, circa 1958-1975
Box 3, Folder 13	Photographs, Artwork Titles: G-L, circa 1958-1975
Box 3, Folder 14	Photographs, Artwork Titles: M-R, circa 1958-1975
Box 3, Folder 15	Photographs, Artwork Titles: S-W, circa 1958-1975
Box 4, Folder 1	Photographs, Miscellaneous Artwork, circa 1958-1975
Box 4, Folder 2	Slides of Artwork, circa 1970-1989
Box 4, Folder 3	Negatives of Artwork, circa 1970-1971

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## Series 5: Artwork, 1948-1975

### *0.2 Linear feet (Box 4, OV 3)*

Scope and Contents: Artwork consists of four of Freed's sketchbooks along with four loose large charcoal drawings.

Box 4, Folder 4-5	Sketchbooks, circa 1967
Oversize 7, Folder 1	Charcoal Drawings, circa 1958-1975

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