



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Otto and Ilse Gerson papers,
1933-1980, 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:	Otto and Ilse Gerson papers
Identifier:	AAA.gersotto
Date:	1933-1980
Extent:	3 Linear feet
Creator:	Gerson, Otto Gerson, Ilse, 1901-1980
Language:	Collection is in English, French and German.
Summary:	The papers of New York art dealers and gallery owners Otto and Ilse Gerson measure 3 linear feet and date from 1933 to 1980. This collection includes biographical materials, correspondence, exhibition files, artists' files, collectors' files, business records, inventory and stock records, printed materials, and photographs.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Otto and Ilse Gerson papers were donated to the Archives of American Art in 1984 by Indian Head Bank North on behalf of Otto and Ilse Gerson.

Available Formats

The bulk of collection is available on 35 mm microfilm reels 4049-4053 at 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

This collection was processed by Rihoko Ueno in 2017.

Preferred Citation

Otto and Ilse Gerson papers, 1933-1980. 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. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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Biographical / Historical

Otto Gerson was born in Germany and immigrated to the United States, where he met and married Ilse Goehler in 1939. They both became U.S. citizens and together they rose to prominence as art dealers in New York City, circa 1940-1962, bringing works by noted post-war European (and some American) artists to the American market.

The Gersons also owned and operated galleries in New York, including Fine Arts Associates and Gerson Gallery. The Gerson Gallery was located at 41 East 57th Street in New York City and later merged with another gallery to form the Marlborough-Gerson Gallery around 1963, shortly after Otto Gerson's death.

Scope and Contents

The papers of New York art dealers and gallery owners Otto and Ilse Gerson measure 3 linear feet and date from 1933 to 1980. This collection includes biographical materials, correspondence, exhibition files, artists' files, collectors' files, business records, inventory and stock records, printed materials, and photographs.

Biographical material consists of Otto and Ilse Gerson's naturalization certificates and Ilse Gerson's will.

Correspondence includes a mixture of personal and professional letters. There are a few scattered letters between Otto and Ilse Gerson as well as correspondence with clients, museums, dealers, and artists. Notable correspondents include art dealer Curt Valentin and the artist Gerhard Marcks. There is also correspondence with the Dina Vierny Gallery in Paris, France.

There is a small number of files on the Joseph Mallord William Turner exhibition at Gerson Gallery in 1960 which include correspondence, loan forms, and printed material.

Artists' files contain correspondence, estimates, inventories, sales records, and printed material for art work by five different artists such as Jacques Lipchitz, David Smith, and Fritz Wotruba.

Collectors' files include correspondence, invoices, photographs, and other material related to purchases by various art collectors.

Business records consist of purchase and sales records, audit reports, balance sheets, certificates of authenticity, a sales ledger, and legal documents regarding the business conducted by Fine Arts Associates and Otto Gerson Gallery, and legal agreements and contracts related to the Marlborough-Gerson Gallery merger.

Inventory and stock records include assorted art inventories, a stock book, and stock cards for artists.

Printed material includes a few Gerson Gallery exhibition catalogs and clippings of exhibition reviews.

Photographs consists of a few snapshots of Otto and Ilse Gerson and images of gallery installations.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 9 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1933-1973 (0.1 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1937-1980 (0.5 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 3: Turner Exhibition Files, 1960-1961 (0.1 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 4: Artists' Files, 1950-1966 (0.3 linear feet; Boxes 1-2)
- Series 5: Collectors' Files, 1956-1966 (0.3 linear feet; Box 2)
- Series 6: Business Records, circa 1945-1964 (0.3 linear feet; Box 2)
- Series 7: Inventory and Stock Records, 1946-1965 (1.3 linear feet; Boxes 2-3)
- Series 8: Printed Material, 1951-1962 (0.1 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 9: Photographs, circa 1945-circa 1960 (2 folders; Box 3)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Collectors and collecting
Art galleries, Commercial -- France -- Paris
Art galleries, Commercial -- New York (State) -- New York
Art, Modern -- 20th century
Gallery owners

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Fine Arts Associates
Galerie Dina Vierny
Lipchitz, Jacques, 1891-1973
Marcks, Gerhard
Marlborough-Gerson Gallery
Otto Gerson Gallery (New York, N.Y.)
Smith, David, 1906-1965
Turner, J. M. W. (Joseph Mallord William), 1775-1851
Valentin, Curt, 1902-1954
Wotruba, Fritz, 1907-1975

Occupations:

Art dealers

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1933-1973

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Biographical material consists of Otto and Ilse Gerson's naturalization certificates and marriage certificate, along with Ilse Gerson's will.

This series is arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 1	Ilse Goehler Citizenship Certificate, 1933
Box 1, Folder 2	Marriage Certificate, 1939
Box 1, Folder 3	Otto Gerson Naturalization and Death Certificates, 1940-1962
Box 1, Folder 4	Ilse Gerson Estate Papers, 1970-1973

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1937-1980

0.5 Linear feet (Box 1)

This series consists of 2 subseries.

- 2.1: General Chronological Correspondence, 1937-1980
- 2.2: Dina Vierny Gallery Correspondence, 1956-1966

2.1: General Chronological Correspondence, 1937-1980

The bulk of this subseries consists of professional correspondence with clients, museums, galleries, art dealers, and collectors. There are a few scattered personal letters between Otto and Ilse Gerson. Notable correspondence includes a 1937 letter from artist Ernst L. Kirchner to art dealer Curt Valentin, letters from artist Gerhard Marcks starting around 1960, and congratulatory letters to Ilse Gerson on her retirement from Marlborough-Gerson Gallery. Letters from Marcks and Kirchner are in German.

Box 1, Folder 5	Chronological Correspondence, 1937-1957
Box 1, Folder 6	Chronological Correspondence, 1958 January-October
Box 1, Folder 7	Chronological Correspondence, 1958 November-December
Box 1, Folder 8	Chronological Correspondence, 1959 January-February
Box 1, Folder 9	Chronological Correspondence, 1959 March-August
Box 1, Folder 10	Chronological Correspondence, 1959 September-December
Box 1, Folder 11	Chronological Correspondence, 1960 January-March
Box 1, Folder 12	Chronological Correspondence, 1960 April-June
Box 1, Folder 13	Chronological Correspondence, 1960 July-November
Box 1, Folder 14	Chronological Correspondence, 1960 November-December
Box 1, Folder 15	Chronological Correspondence, 1961 January
Box 1, Folder 16	Chronological Correspondence, 1961 February
Box 1, Folder 17	Chronological Correspondence, 1961 March-April
Box 1, Folder 18	Chronological Correspondence, 1961 May
Box 1, Folder 19	Chronological Correspondence, 1961 June-July

Box 1, Folder 20	Chronological Correspondence, 1961 August-September
Box 1, Folder 21	Chronological Correspondence, 1961 October
Box 1, Folder 22	Chronological Correspondence, 1961 November
Box 1, Folder 23	Chronological Correspondence, 1961 December
Box 1, Folder 24	Chronological Correspondence, 1962 January-February
Box 1, Folder 25	Chronological Correspondence, 1962 March
Box 1, Folder 26	Chronological Correspondence, 1962 April-May
Box 1, Folder 27	Chronological Correspondence, 1962 June-August
Box 1, Folder 28	Chronological Correspondence, 1962 September-October
Box 1, Folder 29	Chronological Correspondence, 1962 November-December
Box 1, Folder 30	Chronological Correspondence, 1963 January
Box 1, Folder 31	Chronological Correspondence, 1963 February
Box 1, Folder 32	Chronological Correspondence, 1963 March
Box 1, Folder 33	Chronological Correspondence, 1963 April
Box 1, Folder 34	Chronological Correspondence, 1963 May-October
Box 1, Folder 35	Chronological Correspondence, 1964-1969
Box 1, Folder 36	Chronological Correspondence, 1970 January-March
Box 1, Folder 37	Chronological Correspondence, 1970 April-December
Box 1, Folder 38	Chronological Correspondence, 1971-1966
Box 1, Folder 39	Chronological Correspondence, 1977-1980

2.2: Dina Vierny Gallery Correspondence, 1956-1966

This subseries consists of professional correspondence between the Gersons and Dina Vierny Gallery in Paris, France. Most of the correspondence is related to sales of artwork by Constantin Brancusi, Fernand

Leger, Aristide Maillol and others. The letters from Dina Vierny are in French and there are also some letters between Otto Gerson and others in German.

Box 1, Folder 40	Chronological Correspondence, 1956
Box 1, Folder 41	Chronological Correspondence, 1957 January-April
Box 1, Folder 42	Chronological Correspondence, 1957 May-December
Box 1, Folder 43	Chronological Correspondence, 1958 January-June
Box 1, Folder 44	Chronological Correspondence, 1958 July-November
Box 1, Folder 45	Chronological Correspondence, 1959 January-June
Box 1, Folder 46	Chronological Correspondence, 1959 July-November
Box 1, Folder 47	Chronological Correspondence, 1960 January-March
Box 1, Folder 48	Chronological Correspondence, 1960 April-July
Box 1, Folder 49	Chronological Correspondence, 1960 August-December
Box 1, Folder 50	Chronological Correspondence, 1961
Box 1, Folder 51	Chronological Correspondence, 1962
Box 1, Folder 52	Chronological Correspondence, 1963-1966

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Series 3: Turner Exhibition Files, 1960-1961

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Exhibition files consist of correspondence, loan forms, and printed material on the Joseph Mallord William Turner exhibition at Gerson Gallery in 1960.

The material in this series is grouped together by document type, then arranged chronologically within those groupings.

Box 1, Folder 53	Correspondence and Loan Forms, 1960 April-June
Box 1, Folder 54	Correspondence and Loan Forms, 1960 June
Box 1, Folder 55	Correspondence and Loan Forms, 1960 June-August
Box 1, Folder 56	Correspondence and Loan Forms, 1960 September
Box 1, Folder 57	Correspondence and Loan Forms, 1960 September-November
Box 1, Folder 58	Printed Material, 1960-1961

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Series 4: Artists' Files, 1950-1966

0.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

This series consists of correspondence, price estimates, inventories, sales records, and printed material for art work by artists Paul Cezanne, Fernand Leger, Jacques Lipchitz, David Smith, and Fritz Wotruba.

Box 1, Folder 59	Cezanne, Paul, 1950-1956
Box 1, Folder 60	Leger, Fernand, circa 1959-1966
Box 1	Lipchitz, Jacques
Box 1, Folder 61	Correspondence, 1955-1960
Box 1, Folder 62	Correspondence, 1961
Box 1, Folder 63	Correspondence, 1962 January-June
Box 1, Folder 64	Correspondence, 1962 July-December
Box 1, Folder 65	Correspondence, 1963
Box 1, Folder 66	Correspondence, 1964
Box 1, Folder 67	Clippings, 1958-1968
Box 1	Smith, David
Box 1, Folder 68	Correspondence, 1957-1959
Box 1, Folder 69	Correspondence, 1960-1963
Box 1, Folder 70	Undated Photographs of Artwork, circa 1956-circa 1959
Box 1, Folder 71	Photographs of Artwork, 1956
Box 1, Folder 72	Photographs of Artwork, 1957-1959
Box 2	Smith, David
Box 2, Folder 1	Slides of Artwork, circa 1956-circa 1960
Box 2, Folder 2	Clippings, 1957-1966

Box 2	Wotruba, Fritz
Box 2, Folder 3	Correspondence, Price Lists, Sales Inventories, circa 1958-1963
Box 2, Folder 4	Correspondence, Price Lists, Sales Inventories, 1963-1966
Box 2, Folder 5	Printed Material, 1960-1961
Box 2, Folder 6	Printed Material, 1961-1963

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Series 5: Collectors' Files, 1956-1966

0.3 Linear feet (Box 2)

Files on art collectors Walter Bareiss, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lynde Bradley, Ralph F. Colin, Joseph Hirshhorn, Herbert Klotz, the Georg-Kolbe Museum, Alvin S. Lane, John A. MacAulay, May D. Morton, Joseph Pulitzer, and the Uris Brothers Foundation contain correspondence, purchase invoices, market value affidavits, photographs of works, and a list of collectors of Georges Braque bronzes.

The materials in this series are arranged alphabetically by the collector's last name, then chronologically within the grouping if there is more than one folder per name.

Box 2, Folder 7	Bareiss, Walter, 1961-1963
Box 2, Folder 8	Bradley, Mr. and Mrs. Harry L., 1956
Box 2, Folder 9	Bradley, Mr. and Mrs. Harry L., 1957-1958
Box 2, Folder 10	Bradley, Mr. and Mrs. Harry L., 1959
Box 2, Folder 11	Bradley, Mr. and Mrs. Harry L., 1960-1961
Box 2, Folder 12	Bradley, Mr. and Mrs. Harry L., 1961-1962
Box 2, Folder 13	Colin, Ralph F., 1961-1962
Box 2, Folder 14	Collectors of Georges Braque Bronzes, circa 1957-circa 1963
Box 2, Folder 15	Georg Kolbe-Museum, 1957-1958
Box 2, Folder 16	Georg Kolbe-Museum, 1959-1960
Box 2, Folder 17	Georg Kolbe-Museum, 1961
Box 2, Folder 18	Georg Kolbe-Museum, 1962-1964
Box 2, Folder 19	Hirshhorn, Joseph H., 1961-1962
Box 2, Folder 20	Hirshhorn, Joseph H., 1962-1963
Box 2, Folder 21	Klotz, Herbert W., 1958-1962
Box 2, Folder 22	Lane, Alvin S., 1961-1962
Box 2, Folder 23	MacAulay, John A., 1957-1966

Box 2, Folder 24	May, Morton D., Jr., 1956-1963
Box 2, Folder 25	Pulitzer, Joseph, Jr., 1956
Box 2, Folder 26	Pulitzer, Joseph, Jr., 1957
Box 2, Folder 27	Pulitzer, Joseph, Jr., 1958
Box 2, Folder 28	Pulitzer, Joseph, Jr., 1959-1960
Box 2, Folder 29	Pulitzer, Joseph, Jr., 1961-1963
Box 2, Folder 30	Uris Brothers Foundation, 1961-1963

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Series 6: Business Records, circa 1945-1964

0.3 Linear feet (Box 2)

Business records include a wide range of financial and business documents related to the galleries operated by the Gersons. The series consists of purchase and sale records, a sales ledger, balance sheets, audit reports for Fine Arts Associates and Otto Gerson Gallery, a merger agreement and related correspondence between Gerson Gallery and Marlborough Gallery, tax returns, and certificates of authenticity that provide some provenance information for specific artworks.

The material in this series is grouped together by document type, then arranged chronologically within those groupings.

Box 2, Folder 31	Balance Sheets, circa 1956-1962
Box 2, Folder 32	Certificates of Authenticity of Artwork, circa 1945-1961
Box 2, Folder 33	Fine Arts Associates Audit Reports, 1952-1955
Box 2, Folder 34	Fine Arts Associates and Gerson Gallery Audit Reports, 1956-1962
Box 2, Folder 35	Purchase and Sales Records, 1948-1962
Box 2, Folder 36	Purchase and Sales Records, 1963
Box 2, Folder 37	Sales Ledger, 1958-1963
Box 2, Folder 38	Marlborough-Gerson Gallery Merger, 1963
Box 2, Folder 39	Marlborough-Gerson Gallery Merger, 1963
Box 2, Folder 40	Marlborough-Gerson Gallery Merger, 1963
Box 2, Folder 41	Marlborough-Gerson Gallery Merger, 1963
Box 2, Folder 42	Tax Returns, 1964

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Series 7: Inventory and Stock Records, 1946-1965

1.3 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3)

This series includes art inventories, a stock book, stock lists, and stock cards. Stock cards include information about the artwork - dimensions, medium, title, date; pricing - purchase price, asking price, and sale price; and limited provenance information - bought from and sold to. Photographs of artwork are scattered throughout the series.

The material in this series is grouped by document type. The stock cards are arranged alphabetically by the artist's name. Artists with multiple folders are further arranged alphabetically by the title of the artwork.

Box 2, Folder 43	Art Inventories, 1958-1961
Box 2, Folder 44	Consignment Inventory, 1963
Box 2, Folder 45	Stock Book (Disbound), circa 1957-circa 1962
Box 2, Folder 46	Stock Lists, 1956-1962
Box 2	Stock Cards
Box 2, Folder 47	A - Barker, 1957-1962
Box 2, Folder 48	Barlach, 1956-1963
Box 2, Folder 49	Baumeister - Bonnard, 1948-1963
Box 2, Folder 50	Bores - Butler, 1951-1961
Box 2, Folder 51	Cezanne, B-P, 1947-1957
Box 2, Folder 52	Cezanne, P-W, 1952-1960
Box 2, Folder 53	Chagall, 1951-1963
Box 2, Folder 54	Chillida-Corot, 1956-1962
Box 2, Folder 55	Cross, 1950-1958
Box 2, Folder 56	Daumier, 1946-1957
Box 2, Folder 57	Degas, A-M, 1950-1963
Box 2, Folder 58	Degas, P-W, 1951-1963

Box 2, Folder 59	Delacroix - Delvaux, 1953-1961
Box 2, Folder 60	Derain, 1952-1958
Box 2, Folder 61	Despiau, 1957-1961
Box 2, Folder 62	van Dongen - Fantin-Latour, 1949-1963
Box 2, Folder 63	Feininger - Gargallo, 1952-1963
Box 2, Folder 64	Gauguin, B-H, 1954-1961
Box 2, Folder 65	Gauguin, I-T, 1945-1961
Box 2, Folder 66	Giacometti - Gossaert , 1944-1963
Box 2, Folder 67	Gris - Gromaire, 1952-1960
Box 2, Folder 68	Hadju - Jawlensky , 1954-1961
Box 2, Folder 69	Kandinsky, 1949-1961
Box 3	Stock Cards
Box 3, Folder 1	Kirchner, B-L, 1956-1960
Box 3, Folder 2	Kirchner, M-W, 1957-1963
Box 3, Folder 3	Klee - Kohn, 1955-1963
Box 3, Folder 4	Kolbe, 1951-1963
Box 3, Folder 5	Kollwitz - Kupka, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 6	Lanskoy, 1956-1961
Box 3, Folder 7	Laurens, A-N, 1958-1962
Box 3, Folder 8	Laurens, R-Y, 1958-1964
Box 3, Folder 9	Leger, 1955-1962
Box 3, Folder 10	Lehmbruck, 1950-1963

Box 3, Folder 11	Lhote - Liebermann, 1959-1962
Box 3, Folder 12	Lipchitz, A-B, 1956-1964
Box 3, Folder 13	Lipchitz, C-F, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 14	Lipchitz, G-L, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 15	Lipchitz, M-O, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 16	Lipchitz, P-R, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 17	Lipchitz, Sa-So, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 18	Lipchitz, Sp-W, 1957-1963
Box 3, Folder 19	Lorjou - Macke, 1952-1959
Box 3, Folder 20	Maillol, A-R, 1955-1969
Box 3, Folder 21	Maillol, S, 1957-1963
Box 3, Folder 22	Maillol, T-Y - Marc, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 23	Marcks, A-D, 1957-1966
Box 3, Folder 24	Marcks, F-G, 1957-1969
Box 3, Folder 25	Marcks, H-R, 1957-1963
Box 3, Folder 26	Marcks, S-Y, 1956-1962
Box 3, Folder 27	Marin - Marini, 1956-1961
Box 3, Folder 28	Matare, 1953-1964
Box 3, Folder 29	Matisse, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 30	Metzinger - Modigliani, 1957-1961
Box 3, Folder 31	Moller, 1959-1962

Box 3, Folder 32	Monet - Mueller, 1957-1963
Box 3, Folder 33	Munch - Pechstein, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 34	Penalba - Pevsner, 1959-1966 Image(s)
Box 3, Folder 35	Picasso, A-H, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 36	Picasso, L-V, 1956-1963
Box 3, Folder 37	Ping Ming - Renoir, 1957-1961
Box 3, Folder 38	Rodin, A-H, 1957-1964
Box 3, Folder 39	Rodin, I-T, 1955-1964
Box 3, Folder 40	Rosati, B-N, 1957-1962
Box 3, Folder 41	Rosati, O-W - Rouault, 1956-1964
Box 3, Folder 42	Schmidt, 1960-1964
Box 3, Folder 43	Schmidt-Rottluff - Signori, 1956-1962
Box 3, Folder 44	Sintenis, 1957-1963
Box 3, Folder 45	Sisley - Valtat, 1957-1963
Box 3, Folder 46	Van Gogh - Vuillard, 1952-1963
Box 3, Folder 47	Wines, A-I, 1958-1963
Box 3, Folder 48	Wines, I-W, 1958-1965
Box 3, Folder 49	Wotruba, 1959-1963

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Series 8: Printed Material, 1951-1962

0.1 Linear feet (Box 3)

Printed material consists of a few Fine Arts Associates exhibition catalogs and clippings of exhibition reviews.

The material in this series are grouped together by document type, then arranged chronologically within those groupings.

Box 3, Folder 50	Fine Arts Associates Exhibition Catalogs, 1951-1958
Box 3, Folder 51	News Clippings, 1951-1958
Box 3, Folder 52	News Clippings, 1959-1962

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Series 9: Photographs, circa 1945-circa 1960

2 Folders (Box 3)

Photographs consists of a few snapshots of Otto and Ilse Gerson and several images of gallery installations of sculptures.

The photographs are arranged by subject.

Box 3, Folder 53 Otto and Ilse Gerson, circa 1945-circa 1955

Box 3, Folder 54 Gallery Installations, circa 1950-circa 1960

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