
Jayna M. Hanson

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection was provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art

July 16, 2007
Table of Contents

Collection Overview ........................................................................................................ 1
Administrative Information .............................................................................................. 1
Biographical Note............................................................................................................. 2
Scope and Content Note................................................................................................. 3
Arrangement..................................................................................................................... 3
Names and Subjects ........................................................................................................ 3
Container Listing ............................................................................................................ 5
  Series 1: Biographical Information, circa 1942-1982................................................ 5
  Series 2: Business Records, circa 1936-1983........................................................... 6
  Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1947-1978........................................................ 7
  Series 5: Correspondence, circa 1916-1983........................................................... 9
  Series 6: Printed Material, circa 1919-1983........................................................... 12
  Series 7: Photographs, after 1937-circa 1980s.................................................... 16
Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art
Title: William Gropper papers
Identifier: AAA.gropwill
Date: 1916-1983
Extent: 3.3 Linear feet
Creator: Gropper, William, 1897-1977
Language: English
Summary: The papers of painter, illustrator, muralist, and political activist William Gropper measure 3.3 linear feet and date from 1916-1983. Almost one-half of the collection consists of printed materials, including full issues of New Masses, Liberator, and Der Hammer, all featuring illustrations by Gropper. Circa 600 letters include those written to Gropper by Frank Crowninshield, Robert Henri, Louis Lozowick, Raphael Soyer, and others. Also found are photographs of Gropper, his family, colleagues, and friends, as well as scattered writings and notes, business records, biographical information, three drawings, and a fabric sample designed by Gropper.

Administrative Information

Provenance
The collection was donated by Sophie Gropper, Gropper's widow, in 1984.

Related Material
Among the holdings of the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview of William Gropper conducted by Bruce Hooton in 1965. The Louis Lozowick papers contain documentation of Lozowick's research and writings for a biography of Gropper.

The Special Collections Research Center at the Syracuse University Library also holds a collection of William Gropper's papers.

Alternative Forms Available
The papers of William Gropper in the Archives of American Art were digitized in 2007, and total 4,578 images.

Processing Information
The collection was processed by Jayna M. Hanson in 2007. The collection was microfilmed on reels 3501-3504 shortly after receipt, and was digitized in 2007 with funding from the Terra Foundation for American Art.
Biographical Note

William Gropper was born on December 3rd, 1897 in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. His family was impoverished and his parents worked in the New York garment factories. To help his family, Gropper took odd jobs throughout New York City. When he was not busy working, Gropper nurtured his artistic talents by drawing cartoons on sidewalks and the sides of buildings.

In 1912, Gropper began formal art education at the Ferrer School in Greenwich Village where he was influenced by the Ashcan School of social realists, particularly artists Robert Henri and George Bellows. After the Ferrer School, Gropper studied at the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts on a scholarship granted by Frank Alvah Parsons. Following his education, Gropper worked simultaneously at the New York Tribune and Rebel Worker as a draftsman and cartoonist respectively. He continued a career as a cartoonist and illustrator for publications such as Vanity Fair, New Masses, The Nation, Freiheit, and various Jewish and Hebrew publications for more than thirty years. Gropper's cartoons typically portrayed the everyday worker and the injustices he suffered.

Gropper, who was also a painter, produced powerful imagery of social protest. His subjects included industrial strikes and the labor wars of the coal mining and steel industries. Additionally, William Gropper received several commissions from the Federal Arts Project, Works Progress Administration to create murals for various public buildings around the country, including one for the United States Department of the Interior building in Washington, D.C. Here, he created Construction of the Dam to represent the combination of labor and technology to construct various dams on the Colorado River. The Guggenheim Foundation awarded a fellowship to Gropper to travel to the impoverished Dust Bowl region. This trip inspired a series of illustrations that appeared in The Nation. Gropper's trips to Russia and Poland also served to inspire his art.

Later in his career, William Gropper exhibited his artwork throughout the United States and the world. Gropper was also one of the original members of the Artists Equity Association founded in 1947. Gropper's artwork can be found in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian Institution, The National Gallery of Art, The Butler Institute of American Art, Princeton University, The Phillips Collection, The William J. Clinton Presidential Library as well as many other museums and universities. William Gropper remained in New York City and the surrounding area with his wife, Sophie until his death in 1977.
Scope and Content Note

The papers of painter, illustrator, muralist, and political activist William Gropper measure 3.3 linear feet and date from 1916-1983.

Three folders of scattered Biographical Information are found for William Gropper, his wife Sophie and their children. Business Records consist of lists of artwork, price lists, contracts, receipts, and other financial records. Scattered Writings and Notes include mostly writings about Gropper by others, lists of works of art, and miscellaneous writings. Works of Art include three original drawings by Gropper and a sample of fabric designed by Gropper. Circa 600 letters within the papers were written to William Gropper between 1916 and 1977 (bulk, 1970s), although Sophie Gropper’s correspondence is also included. Found here are letters from Frank Crowninshield, Robert Henri, Louis Lozowick, Frank Alva Parsons, Raphael Soyer, and others. There are also letters concerning Gropper’s participation in the Federal Art Project and from Ben Horowitz of the Heritage Gallery who represented Gropper’s artwork.

Almost one-half of the collection consists of Printed Materials, including full issues of New Masses, Liberator, and Der Hammer, all featuring illustrations by Gropper. Also found are auction and exhibition catalogs, clippings, press releases, and printed reproductions of Gropper’s artwork.

Photographs are of Gropper, his family, colleagues, friends, family vacations, and works of art.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into seven series:

- Series 1: Biographical Information, circa 1942-1982 (Box 1; 3 Folders)
- Series 2: Business Records, circa 1936-1983 (Box 1; 8 Folders)
- Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1947-1978 (Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 4: Works of Art, circa 1940s, 1952, after 1958 (Box 1, OV 4; 2 Folders)
- Series 5: Correspondence, circa 1916-1983 (Box 1; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 6: Printed Material, circa 1919-1983 (Box 1-3, OV 4; 1.4 linear feet)
- Series 7: Photographs, after 1937-circa 1980s (Box 3; 0.8 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
- Art -- Political aspects
- Illustrators -- New York (State) -- New York
- Muralists -- New York (State) -- New York
- Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
- Political activists

Types of Materials:
- Drawings
- Photographs
Names:

Crowninshield, Frank, 1872-1947
Federal Art Project
Gropper, Sophie
Henri, Robert, 1865-1929
Heritage Gallery
Horowitz, Benjamin, 1912-
Lozowick, Louis, 1892-1973
Parsons, Frank Alvah, 1868-1930
Soyer, Raphael, 1899-1987
Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Information, circa 1942-1982

3 Folders (Box 1)

This series consists of scattered biographical information, including fingerprint records, resumes, an estate appraisal, Gropper's funeral arrangement information, and immunization records. Information pertaining to Sophie Gropper includes a photograph, diet information and permit. Also included is information concerning the Gropper Family such as estate information, bank records, receipts, and report cards.

This series is arranged by family name to which the biographical information pertains.

Box 1, Folder 1  
William Gropper, 1942-1977, undated
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 2  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 3  
(partially scanned)
Image(s)

Return to Table of Contents
Series 2: Business Records, circa 1936-1983

8 Folders (Box 1)
William Gropper's scattered Business Records include lists of works of art, purchase orders for artwork, bills, royalty information, contracts with museums and publishing companies, bank records and receipts.

Box 1, Folder 4  Price Lists, 1968-1983, undated
             Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 5-6  Art Purchase Orders, 1967-1980, undated
                   (2 folders)
                   Image(s)
                   Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 7  Bills, 1970-1979
                (not scanned)

Box 1, Folder 8  Book Royalties, 1969-1970
                Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 9  Contracts, 1936, 1939, 1955, 1968
                Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 10  Financial and Bank Records, 1974-1977, undated
                 (not scanned)

                Image(s)
Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1947-1978

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

This series includes descriptions of Gropper’s works of art, lists of works of art, writings by and about Gropper, including a dissertation about the artist by Joseph Anthony Gahn. There is also one folder of scattered minutes of the Committee on Progress of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. It is unclear what role Gropper played on the Committee.

Box 1, Folder 12  Descriptions of Works of Art, undated
                   Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 13  Dissertation on Gropper, 1966
                   Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 14  Lists of Works of Art, 1947, undated
                   Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 15  Minutes, Committee on Progress, American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1974
                   Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 16  Notes, undated
                   Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 17  Writings about Gropper, 1978, undated
                   Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 18  Writings by Gropper, undated
                   Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 19  Miscellaneous Writings, 1953,1974, undated
                   Image(s)

Return to Table of Contents

2 Folders (Box 1, OV 4)
This series includes three original pen and pencil drawings by William Gropper. One drawing is of three unidentified men which Gropper signs with hebrew characters. A second drawing is a profile of a seated, unidentified man. The last sketch is of an unidentified group of people. A Gropper designed fabric sample is included as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 20</th>
<th>Drawings, circa 1949, after 1958, undated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 21</th>
<th>Fabric Sample, 1952</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(See Box 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Box 4 (sol), Folder 1 | Oversized Fabric Sample, 1952 |

Return to Table of Contents
Series 5: Correspondence, circa 1916-1983

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

This series includes letters written to William Gropper from 1916 until 1977, including some photocopies. Very few of William Gropper's responses are in this collection, which are mostly undated. There is also correspondence written by and to Sophie Gropper from 1980 to 1983. Notable correspondents include Louis Lozowick, Frank Crowninshield, Raphael Soyer, Robert Henri, and Frank Alvah Parsons. There are many letters from Ben Horowitz with the Heritage Gallery, which sold Gropper's art. Additionally, there are letters concerning William Gropper's participation in the Works Progress Administration. Correspondence from 1935 documents Gropper's contributions to *Vanity Fair* magazine before it ceased publication in 1936. Correspondence after Gropper's death is between his widow, Sophie Gropper and various museums, galleries, and publishers.

See Appendix for a list of selected correspondents from Series 5

Correspondence is arranged chronologically.

Appendix: Selected Correspondents from Series 5

Although this index is not comprehensive, an effort has been made to highlight the major artists, museums and galleries with which William and Sophie Gropper corresponded.

- Angelo, Emidio (artist): 1971; 1972
- Ballot, Adele (*Vanity Fair* magazine): 1935
- Bliven, Bruce (*The New Republic*): 1936
- Broadley, Hugh (Phoenix Art Museum): 1968
- Bromfield, Innes (*Vanity Fair* magazine): 1935
- Cody, Bruce (Wisconsin State University): 1970
- Conacher, Don (Galerie de Tours; Conacher Galleries): 1964; 1966; 1968
- Constable, W. G. (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston): 1941
- Crowninshield, Frank (*Vanity Fair* magazine): 1935; 1936
- Dewitt, John (Department of the Interior): 1971
- Dows, Olin (United States Treasury Department): 1936
- Dreiser, Theodore (artist): 1934
- Ealand, Maria (Federal Works Agency- Public Buildings Administration): 1939; 1940
- Eastman, Crystal (The Liberator): 1919
- Foley, Martha (*Story* magazine): 1936
- Garson, Inez (Cornell University): 1964
- Gibbs, Wolcott (*The New Yorker*): 1936
- Gillette, Guy M. (United States Senator, Iowa): 1949
- Gorney, Jay (ACA Galleries): 1975
- Gould, Beatrice Blackman (*Ladies’ Home Journal*): 1937
- Gropper, Lance (grandson): 1969
- Gross, Hilda (ACA Galleries): 1979
- Harkavy, Susan (ACA Galleries): 1981
- Heintzelman, Arthur W. (Boston Public Library): 1953
- Henri, Robert (artist): 1921
• Hyman, Linda (ACA Galleries): 1981
• Kainen, Jacob (National Collection of Fine Arts): 1969
• Korn, Gail (Whitney Museum of American Art): 1967
• Lamson, James Q. (Ohio University): 1973
• Lerner, Abram ( Hirshhorn Museum, New York): 1972
• Lewis, John L. (United Mine Workers of America): 1936
• Lozowick, Louis (artist): 1970-1973; undated
• Malawer, Lisa (ACA Galleries): 1982
• Mannes, Marya ( Vogue magazine): 1936
• Meador, Philip L. (Galerie de Tours): 1964
• McCabe, Cynthia ( Hirshhorn Museum, New York): 1972
• McGuire, Harry ( Ringmaster magazine): 1936
• McLouth, Mildred (Berkeley Art Museum): 1931
• Minnigerode, C. Powell (Corcoran Gallery of Art): 1943
• Newman, Dorothy (M. H. DeYoung Memorial Museum)
• O'Conner, Francis V. (NCFA, Smithsonian Institution): 1970
• Owen, William B. (United States Treasury Department): 1937
• Palmer, William C. (Mural Painters Society): 1936
• Parsons, Frank Alvah (New York School of Fine and Applied Art): 1916
• Rhodes, Reilly P. (Canton Art Institute): 1971; 1972
• Rogerson, Ann S. (Montclair Art Museum): 1969
• Rowan, Edward B. (United States Treasury Department): 1935; 1937; 1939; 1941
• Saint-Gaudens, Homer (Carnegie Institute): 1947
• Schmeckebler, Laurence (Syracuse University): 1964
• Schoener, Allon (Jewish Museum, New York): 1966
• Sharkey, Alice (United States Treasury Department): 1936
• Singer, Clyde (Butler Institute of American Art): 1973
• Soby, James Thrall (The Museum of Modern Art): 1964
• SoRelle, Jane (ACA Gallery, Rome): 1964
• Soyer, Raphael (artist): 1947; 1970
• Taylor, Francis Henry (The Museum of Modern Art): 1942
• Tolley, William P. (Syracuse University): 1968
• United States Treasury Department: 1935
• Vanity Fair magazine: 1935
• Valeska, S. (Valeska Art Studios): 1966
• Watson, Forbes (United States Treasury Department): 1936; 1942
• Winser, Beatrice (Newark Museum): 1935
• Yasko, Karel (Public Buildings Service): 1969; 1971; 1977; undated
• Young, Art (artist): 1934

Box 1, Folder 22  Correspondence, 1916-1923
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 23  Correspondence, 1931-1935
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 24  Correspondence, 1936-1939
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 25  Correspondence, 1940-1949
Box 1, Folder 26  Correspondence, 1952-1955
Box 1, Folder 27  Correspondence, 1961-1966
Box 1, Folder 28  Correspondence, 1967
Box 1, Folder 29  Correspondence, 1968-1969
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, 1980-1981
Box 1, Folder 38  Correspondence, 1982-1983
Box 1, Folder 39  Correspondence, undated
Series 6: Printed Material, circa 1919-1983

1.4 Linear feet (Box 1-3, OV 4)

This series includes full issues of magazines illustrated by William Gropper including New Masses, Liberator and Der Hammer. There are also clippings from newspapers and magazines about William Gropper or featuring his illustrations. Gropper’s illustrations appear in Hound Dog Moses and the Promised Land by Walter D. Edmonds and “In Gold We Trust (J.P. Morgan, Al. Capone and CO.)” by Larry Harr. There is one folder of Gropper's collection of first issue United Nations’ postage stamps, one of which was illustrated by Gropper. Also included are auction catalogs, stationary, exhibition announcements and catalogs for Gropper's artwork, blank greeting cards, press releases and bulletins, and order forms.

This series is arranged by type of materials. Clippings from magazines illustrated by Gropper have been filed before folders containing full issues of New Masses magazines that feature Gropper's illustrations. All dated material is arranged chronologically with undated material following.

Box 1, Folder 40-41  Auction Catalogs, 1982-1983
(2 folders)
Image(s)
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 42  Stationary and Enclosures, 1971, undated
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 43-49  Clippings, 1922-1964, undated
(See also Box 4; 7 folders)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 1-6  Clippings, 1960-1983, undated
(See also Box 4; 6 folders)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 7-19  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1935-1983, undated
(See also Box 4; 13 folders)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 20  Blank Greeting Cards, undated
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 21  Miscellaneous, Art Related, 1974-1975, undated
(partially scanned)
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 22  Miscellaneous, Not Art Related, undated
(not scanned)

Box 2, Folder 23  Order Forms, 1972, undated
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 24  Collection of United Nations Postage Stamps, 1964-1971
Image(s)

Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 26-40  Illustrations by Gropper, 1919-1943
(See also Box 4; 15 folders)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Image(s)
Box 3, Folder 1  Illustrations by Gropper, 1945
Box 3, Folder 2  Illustrations by Gropper, 1946
Box 3, Folder 3  Illustrations by Gropper, 1947
Box 3, Folder 4  Illustrations by Gropper, 1948
Box 3, Folder 5  Illustrations by Gropper, 1953
Box 3, Folder 6  Illustrations by Gropper, 1958-1960
Box 3, Folder 7  Illustrations by Gropper, 1967-1968
Box 3, Folder 8  Illustrations by Gropper, 1970-1971
Box 3, Folder 9  Illustrations by Gropper, 1973-1974
Box 3, Folder 10 Illustrations by Gropper, undated
Box 3, Folder 11-15  *New Masses*, 1926-1928, 1934, 1936
                   *(See also Box 4; 5 folders)*
Box 4 (sol)        Oversized Clippings  
                   *(See Box 1, F45, F47 and Box 2, F1, F6)*
Box 4 (sol)        Oversized Exhibition Announcements
(See Box 2, F14)

Box 4 (sol)  Oversized Illustrated by Gropper
(See Box 2, F26 and Box 3, F10)

Box 4 (sol)  Oversized New Masses
(See Box 3, F11)
Series 7: Photographs, after 1937-circa 1980s

0.8 Linear feet (Box 3)

This series includes photographs of William Gropper, his family, colleagues and friends. Additionally, there are photographs of works of art, slides from family vacations, negatives and duplicates.

Box 3, Folder 16-18  William Gropper, undated
                        (3 folders)
                        Image(s)
                        Image(s)
                        Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 19      William Gropper with Family, undated
                        Image(s)

                        (2 folders)
                        Image(s)
                        Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 22      Gropper Family Vacations, 1963, 1972, undated
                        Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 23      Slides, Gropper Family, 1975
                        (not scanned)

Box 3, Folder 24      Social Functions, 1972, undated
                        Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 25      Colleagues and Friends, 1961, undated
                        Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 26-27   Works of Art, Automobile Industry, Detroit, Michigan, after 1940
                        (2 folders; not scanned)

Box 3, Folder 28      Works of Art, Construction of the Dam, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., after 1937
                        (not scanned)

Box 3, Folder 29      Works of Art, Suburban Post in Winter, Freeport, New York, after 1938
                        (partially scanned)
                        Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 30      Works of Art, Murals, undated
Box 3, Folder 31  Works of Art, Sculpture and Ceramics, 1980s(?), undated  
(not scanned)

Box 3, Folder 32  Works of Art, Stained Glass, 1967  
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 33-50  Works of Art, 1968, undated  
(18 folders; not scanned)

Box 3, Folder 51-52  Works of Art, Miscellaneous, undated  
(2 folders; not scanned)

Box 3, Folder 53-56  Duplicate Photographs, undated  
(4 folders; not scanned)

Box 3, Folder 57  Miscellaneous, undated  
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 58-59  Negatives, undated  
(2 folders; not scanned)

Return to Table of Contents