



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Shirley Jaffe Papers, circa
1950-2011, 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:	Shirley Jaffe papers
Identifier:	AAA.jaffshir
Date:	circa 1950-2011
Extent:	7.1 Linear feet 0.26 Gigabytes
Creator:	Jaffe, Shirley, 1923-
Language:	English; French
Summary:	The papers of artist Shirley Jaffe measure 7.1 linear feet and 0.260 GB and date from circa 1950-2011. The collection documents her life and career as an American painter living in Paris through biographical material, letters, notebooks, writings, project files, printed and digital material, photographic material, and sketchbooks.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Shirley Jaffe papers were donated to the Archives of American Art by Shirley Jaffe in 2014.

Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Shirley Jaffe conducted by Avis Berman, September 27-28, 2010.

Processing Information

The collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid prepared by Hilary Price in 2015. Born-digital materials were processed in 2019 by Kirsi Ritosalmi-Kisner with funding provided by Smithsonian Collection Care and Preservation Fund.

Preferred Citation

Shirley Jaffe papers, 1950s-2011. 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.

Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate access copy requires advance notice.

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Biographical / Historical

Shirley Jaffe (1923-2016), née Sternstein, was an American painter living and working in Paris.

Born in New Jersey and raised in Brooklyn, Shirley Jaffe completed her studies at the Cooper Union in 1945. In 1949 she and husband Irving Jaffe moved to Washington, D.C. where she attended the Phillips Art School. Later that same year, they moved to Paris. The Jaffes returned to New York briefly in the early 1950s, but moved back to Paris in 1953, where Shirley Jaffe has been living and working ever since. She was married to Irving Jaffe until 1962.

Jaffe started her career as an abstract expressionist but began to work in a flat and geometric style in the late 1960s. She was part of the American expatriate art scene in Paris and associated with Joan Mitchell, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Sam Francis, Kimber Smith, and others. In 1963, Jaffe received a grant from the Ford Foundation to spend a year working in Berlin.

Jaffe took on several commissions in France including illustrations, murals, and notably, the design of stained glass windows in the Chapelle Saint-Jean-l'Évangéliste in Perpignan, titled *Funéraria*. Her paintings have been exhibited in New York at the Holly Solomon Gallery and the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, and at galleries and museums throughout France.

Scope and Contents

The papers of artist Shirley Jaffe measure 7.1 linear feet and 0.260 GB and date from circa 1950-2011. The collection documents her life and career as an American painter living in Paris through biographical material, letters, notebooks, writings, project files, printed and digital material, photographic material, and sketchbooks.

Scattered biographical materials include address and appointment books, an interview with Jaffe by Jeff Perkins recorded on one videocassette, and other documents.

Letters make up a significant portion of the collection and are primarily written to Shirley from friends and family. In addition to frequent letters received from her siblings and mother, Jaffe also received letters from artists Joan Mitchell, Sam Francis, Kimber Smith, Sylvia Stone and Al Held, Hermine Ford, Robert Kushner, and George Sugarman.

The papers include eighty-four notebooks kept by Jaffe containing lists, addresses, notes, sketches and the occasional diary entry. Project files contain correspondence, gouache studies, sketches, and printed material related to commissions and collaborations, including illustrations, murals, and the design of stained glass windows in the Chapelle Saint-Jean-l'Évangéliste in Perpignan, titled *Funéraria*.

Printed materials include articles, published books about Jaffe, clippings, exhibition catalogs, a recorded radio broadcast, and reviews.

There are photographs, slides, transparencies, and digital photographs depicting Jaffe's paintings, exhibitions, and artists and art world figures including Larry Rivers, Kimber Smith, Linda Nochlin, Sam Francis, Paul Jenkins, and Joan Mitchell at exhibition openings in the 1960s-1970s. Eight sketchbooks contain drawings by Jaffe in ink, marker, and pen.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 7 series

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1950s-2000s (0.3 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 2: Letters, 1950s-2000s (3 linear feet; Box 1-4)
- Series 3: Notebooks and Writings, 1950s-2000s (0.9 linear feet; Box 4-5)
- Series 4: Project Files, 1970s-2003 (0.6 linear feet; Box 5, 9)
- Series 5: Printed Material, 1952-2011 (0.7 linear feet; Box 5-6, 9)
- Series 6: Photographic Material, 1950s-circa 2010 (1.3 linear feet; Box 6-8, 0.260 GB; ER01)
- Series 7: Sketchbooks, 1960s-2000s (0.3 linear feet; Box 8)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Expatriate artists -- France
Painters -- France -- Paris
Women artists -- France -- Paris

Types of Materials:

Diaries
Interviews
Photographs
Sketchbooks
Sketches
Video recordings

Names:

Ford, Hermine
Francis, Sam, 1923-1994
Held, Al, 1928-
Jenkins, Paul, 1923-2012
Kushner, Robert, 1949-
Mitchell, Joan, 1926-1992
Nochlin, Linda
Rivers, Larry, 1925-2002
Smith, Kimber, 1922-1981
Stone, Sylvia, 1928-
Sugarman, George, 1912-1999

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1950s-2000s

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Biographical material dates from circa 1950s-2000s and includes address books, appointment books, a video recorded interview, biographical and life documents, and resumes.

Box 1, Folder 1	Address Books, 1950s-2000s
Box 1, Folder 2-6	Appointment Books, 1987-2006
Box 1, Folder 7	Biographical Documents, 1952-1974
Box 1, Folder 8	Interview with Shirley Jaffe by Jeff Perkins, 2003 <i>1 Videocassettes (VHS)</i>
Box 1, Folder 9	Resumes and Bios, 1954-circa 1983

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Series 2: Letters, 1950s-2000s

3 Linear feet (Box 1-4)

Letters date from circa 1950s-2000s, and include frequent letters sent to Jaffe from her mother Ann Sternstein, her sister Elaine Friedberg, and her brother and sister-in-law Jerome and Trina Sternstein. Also included are letters from Irving Jaffe, other family, friends, and artists Joan Mitchell, Sam Francis, Kimber Smith, Sylvia Stone and Al Held, Hermine Ford, Robert Kushner, and George Sugarman. Some letters contain photographs and printed material. One file contains letters written by Jaffe. Miscellaneous letters are comprised of single letters and those from unidentified senders. Postcards, holiday, and greeting cards are also found in this series, as well as professional letters received by Jaffe from galleries and museums.

Letters are arranged alphabetically by sender. Postcards, holiday and greeting cards, and professional letters are arranged at the end of the series.

Box 1, Folder 10	Adams, Pat, 1970s-2000s
Box 1, Folder 11	Aptekar, Ken, 1990s
Box 1, Folder 12	Bennett, John and Karen Lee (Grant), 1970s
Box 1, Folder 13	Borregaard, Nancy, 1970s-1980s
Box 1, Folder 14	Clément, Alain, 1990s
Box 1, Folder 15	Di Lascia, Alfred, 1978
Box 1, Folder 16-19	Di Lascia, Marjorie, 1960s-1970s
Box 1, Folder 20	Fahy, Agnes, 1962-1963
Box 1, Folder 21	Ford, Hermine, 1990s-2000s
Box 1, Folder 22	Francis, Sam, 1963-1974
Box 1, Folder 23-25	Friedberg, Elaine, 1960s
Box 2, Folder 1-7	Friedberg, Elaine, 1960s-1980s
Box 2, Folder 8	Goldin, Amy, 1970-1978
Box 2, Folder 9	Goldstein, Marvin, 1964-1966
Box 2, Folder 10	Goodwin, Muriel, circa 1961-2000s

Box 2, Folder 11	Hanley, Sarah, 1980s-2000s
Box 2, Folder 12	Heward, Ross and Gabriele, 1970s-2000s
Box 2, Folder 13	Honegaar-Lavater, Gottfried and Warja, 1961-1980
Box 2, Folder 14	Jacobs, Rachel, 1962-1965
Box 2, Folder 15-17	Jaffe, Irving, 1950s-1970s
Box 2, Folder 18	Jaffe, Shirley, 1950s-1975
Box 2, Folder 19	Kushner, Robert, 1990s-2000s
Box 2, Folder 20	Lefebvre-Foinet, Lucien, 1966-1968
Box 2, Folder 21	Madden, Sally, 1973-1980
Box 2, Folder 22	Matthews, Ida, 1970-1973
Box 2, Folder 23	Mitchell, Joan, 1961-1962
Box 2, Folder 24	Moreni, Claude and Mattia, 1966-1968
Box 2, Folder 25	Mozur, Nancy, 2000s
Box 2, Folder 26	Nebola, Elnora, 1973-1976
Box 2, Folder 27	Posel, Edith, 1990s
Box 2, Folder 28	Rosen Blackwood, Nancy and Benjamin, 1990s-2000s
Box 2, Folder 29	Rosenthal, Deborah, 1990s
Box 3, Folder 1	Rubenstein, Raphael and Elena, 1975-1990s
Box 3, Folder 2	Sadoff, Irvin E., 1954-1979
Box 3, Folder 3	Seidel, Rachel, 1980s-1990s
Box 3, Folder 4	Smith, Kimber, 1961-1986

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 3, Folder 5	Soriano, Peter, 1990s-2000s
Box 3, Folder 6	Sternstein, Adria and Ava (nieces), 1990s-2000s
Box 3, Folder 7-11	Sternstein, Ann, 1950s-1960s
Box 3, Folder 12	Sternstein, Jerome, 1950s-1960s
Box 3, Folder 13	Sternstein, Martin and Barbara (Stokely), 1990s-2000s
Box 3, Folder 14-18	Sternstein, Trina and Jerome, 1960s-2000s
Box 3, Folder 19	Stone-Held, Sylvia and Al Held, 1966-1980
Box 3, Folder 20	Sugarman, George, 1968-1993
Box 3, Folder 21	Van Over, Philip, 1963-1968
Box 3, Folder 22	Wechsler, Judith, 1975-1981
Box 3, Folder 23	Miscellaneous Letters, A-D, 1950s-2000s
Box 4, Folder 1-4	Miscellaneous, E-Z, 1950s-2000s
Box 4, Folder 5	Miscellaneous Letters, Unidentified Senders, 1950s-1990s
Box 4, Folder 6	Holiday and Greeting Cards, 1990s-2000s
Box 4, Folder 7	Postcards, 1960s-1980s
Box 4, Folder 8	Professional Letters, 1990s-2000s

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Series 3: Notebooks and Writings, 1950s-2000s

0.9 Linear feet (Box 4-5)

Notebooks and writings date from circa 1950s-2000s and include eighty-four notebooks kept by Jaffe with lists, addresses, notes, sketches, and the occasional dairy entry. Also included are scattered notebook pages written by Jaffe and one writing by an unidentified author about Jaffe's work.

Box 4, Folder 9-19	Notebooks, circa 1950s-2000s
Box 5, Folder 1-2	Notebooks, 1950s-2000s
Box 5, Folder 3	Notes, 1950s-1995
Box 5, Folder 4	Writing by Unidentified Author, 1980s

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Series 4: Project Files, 1970s-2003

0.6 Linear feet (Box 5, 9)

Project files date from circa 1970s-2003 and contain correspondence, gouache studies, sketches, photographic material, and printed material related to commissions and collaborations Jaffe was involved in, including illustrations, murals, and the design of stained glass windows in the Chapelle Saint-Jean-l'Evangéliste in Perpignan, titled *Funéraria*.

Box 5, Folder 5	Bibliothèque George Brassens, Chambéry, 1983 Oversized material housed in Box 9, Folder 1
Box 5, Folder 6	Flyer Design, 1997
Box 5, Folder 7-9	<i>Funéraria</i> , Chapelle Saint-Jean-l'Evangéliste de Perpignan, 1994-2003
Box 5, Folder 10	<i>Médecine/Science</i> Cover, 1999
Box 5, Folder 11	Mural, École Hôtelière, Macon, 1978 Oversized material housed in Box 9, Folder 2
Box 5, Folder 12-14	Mural, Direction Régionale France Télécom, Dijon, 1983
Box 5, Folder 15	<i>Poste Restante</i> , 1992 Oversized material housed in Box 9, Folder 1
Box 5, Folder 16	Poster Design, 1970s
Box 5, Folder 17	<i>Les Tentations Du Paysage</i> , by Maryline Desbiolles, Illustrations by Jaffe, 1997
Box 9, Folder 1	Oversize Bibliothèque George Brassens, Chambéry, from Box 5, Folder 5
Box 9, Folder 1	Oversize <i>Poste Restante</i> , from Box 5, Folder 15
Box 9, Folder 2	Oversize Mural, École Hôtelière, Macon from Box 5, Folder 11, 1978

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Series 5: Printed Material, 1952-2011

0.7 Linear feet (Box 5-6, 9)

Printed material dates from 1952-2011, and pertains to Jaffe's career, influences, and commissions. Items include articles, books, booklets, clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, magazines, postcards, reviews, a sound recording of a radio broadcast, and additional printed material featuring work commissioned by Jaffe.

Box 5, Folder 18	Articles, 1990s-2000s
Box 5, Folder 19	Book, <i>L'art comme expérience: Shirley Jaffe and pratiques contemporaines</i> , 2010
Box 5, Folder 20	Book, <i>Quelques Écarts</i> by Maryline Desbiolles, 1996
Box 5, Folder 21	Booklet of Poetry, <i>Red/Gray</i> by Jonathan Williams, 1952
Box 5, Folder 22	Clippings, 1965-1980
Box 5, Folder 23	Exhibition Announcements, 1961-2010
Box 5, Folder 24	Exhibition Catalogs, 1975-2004 Oversized material housed in Box 9, Folder 4
Box 5, Folder 25	Magazine, <i>The Artists's Magazine</i> , 2011
Box 5, Folder 26	Postcards, 1950s-1980s
Box 6, Folder 1	Printed Material, Jaffe Commissions, 1997-2010 Oversized material housed in Box 9, Folder 4
Box 6, Folder 2	Radio Broadcast, <i>Les Arts et les Gens</i> , 1991 <i>1 Sound cassette</i>
Box 6, Folder 3-4	Reviews, 1980s-2000s
Box 9, Folder 3	Newspaper, <i>The Brooklyn Rail</i> , 2010
Box 9, Folder 4	Oversize Exhibition Catalog from Box 5, Folder 24
Box 9, Folder 4	Oversize Printed Material, Jaffe Commision from Box 6, Folder 1

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Series 6: Photographic Material, 1950s-circa 2010

1.3 Linear feet (Box 6-8)

0.26 Gigabytes (ER01)

Photographic material dates from circa 1950s-circa 2010 and contains photographs, slides, transparencies, and digital photographs. Subjects include Jaffe's artwork, exhibition installations, friends and family, the *Funéraria* commission, portraits of Jaffe, openings and artists, and travel. Artists and art world figures include Larry Rivers, Kimber Smith, Linda Nochlin, Sam Francis, Joan Mitchell, and others.

Box 6, Folder 5-18	Artwork, 1980s-circa 2010
Box 6, Folder 19-20	Exhibitions, 1995-1999
Box 7, Folder 1-2	Exhibitions, 2001-2008 <i>Includes born-digital records, see ER01.</i>
Folder ER01	Exhibitions, Digital Photographs, 2008 <i>0.26 Gigabytes (40 computer files)</i>
Box 7, Folder 3	Friends and Family, 1970s-2000s
Box 7, Folder 4-5	<i>Funéraria</i> , circa 1998-1999
Box 7, Folder 6	Shirley Jaffe, 1950s-2000s Image(s)
Box 7, Folder 7	Openings and Artists, circa 1958-circa 1990 Image(s)
Box 8, Folder 1	Travel, Italy, 2001

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Series 7: Sketchbooks, 1960s-2000s

0.3 Linear feet (Box 8)

Eight sketchbooks date from circa 1960s-2000s, and contain drawings in ink, marker, and pen.

Box 8, Folder 2-7

Sketchbooks, 1960s-2000s

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