



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Los Angeles Art Association Records, 1922-1990, in the Archives of American Art

Anna Rimel

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by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund

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Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Los Angeles Art Association records
Date:	1922-1990
Identifier:	AAA.losangea
Creator:	Los Angeles Art Association
Extent:	12.6 Linear feet
Language:	Collection is in English
Summary:	The Los Angeles Art Association records measure 12.6 linear feet and date from 1922-1990. Almost a third of the collection consists of artists' files containing a wide variety of materials documenting the association's relationship with numerous California and international artists. Also found are ten scrapbooks documenting exhibitions and events over the course of 50 years, administrative files, correspondence, subject files, exhibition files, financial and legal records, printed material, and photographic material depicting artists, events, and artwork. Scattered files of Executive Director Helen Wurdemann's are also found throughout the collection.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Los Angeles Art Association records were donated to the Archives of American in 1990 and 1991 by Richard Campbell of the Los Angeles Art Association.

Processing Information

The collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid prepared by Anna Rimel in 2015, with funding provided by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund. The Archives of American Art has implemented minimal processing tactics when possible in order to increase information about and access to more of our collections.

Minimal processing included arrangement to the series, subseries, and folder levels. Generally, items within folders were simply verified with folder titles, but not arranged further. The collection was rehoused in archival containers and folders, but not all staples and clips were removed.

Preferred Citation

Los Angeles Art Association records, 1922-1990. 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

Originally founded as the Museum Patrons Association in 1925, the Los Angeles Art Association (LAAA) supported California artists and played an integral role in developing the Los Angeles art community.

The original intent of the Museum Patrons Association was to purchase works of art for the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art. In 1933, the organization separated from the museum and was renamed the Los Angeles Art Association with a primary goal to connect to the broader Los Angeles art community through exhibitions, limited sales, rentals, events, and education. In 1944, with Helen Wurdemann (1892-1988) as Executive Director, the LAAA began to focus more on contemporary local artists, providing a place for the Southern California "hard-edge" abstractionist movement to flourish. In 1951, California painter Lorser Feitelson curated an exhibition of Hans Burkhardt, the LAAA's first solo exhibition of a local artist. Throughout its existence and continuing today, the LAAA has served as a place for arts education, outreach, and community—from its representation of artists studying under the GI bill between 1953 and 1965, to its participation in Monday night art-walks after its move to "Gallery Row" in 1960.

Scope and Contents

The Los Angeles Art Association records measure 12.6 linear feet and date from 1922-1990. Almost a third of the collection consists of artists' files containing a wide variety of materials documenting the association's relationship with numerous California and international artists. Also found are ten scrapbooks documenting exhibitions and events over the course of 50 years, administrative files, correspondence, subject files, exhibition files, financial and legal records, printed material, and photographic material depicting artists, events, and artwork. Scattered files of Executive Director Helen Wurdemann's are also found throughout the collection.

Administrative records include board of trustees' meeting minutes, membership correspondence, materials relating to publicity, visitor and artist registers, founding documents, and files on the history of the organization. Files about or created by Executive Director Helen Wurdemann are also found.

Correspondence, including greeting cards and notes, documents the LAAA's relationship with artists, other associations, museums, and collectors. Hans Burkhardt, Emil J. Kosa Jr., Roger Kuntz, Stanton MacDonald-Wright, Arnold Menches, and Peter Selz are among the correspondents.

Subject files compiled and maintained by the LAAA document special interests, events, and projects. There are files for various arts organizations, Stendhal Gallery, and the Watts Towers Commission.

Exhibition files are found for "Loan Exhibition of International Art" (1937), "Photographs of the George Eastman House Collection 1840-1915" (1968), "Independent Artists of Los Angeles" (1923), and "Top Flight Artists of Southern California" (1941), among others.

Almost a third of the collection consists of artists' files documenting the LAAA's relationship with many California and international artists over the years. Files are varied but often include artists' biographical information, resumes, photographs, price lists, artist statements, and printed materials. Artists include Hans Burkhardt, Jules Engel, and Jack Zajac, among many others.

Financial and legal records consist of daily and exhibition ledgers, art rental and sales files, audit reports and financial statements, billing receipts, bankruptcy legal papers, a prints price list, and miscellaneous financial notes.

Printed material consists of museum and LAAA bulletins, clippings, art school catalogs and brochures, exhibition announcements and catalogs, bulletins and newsletters from other organizations, periodicals, proofs of the "Loan Exhibition of International Art" (1937) exhibition catalog, and a limited edition copy of the book, *Paintings* by William Merritt Chase signed to the LAAA by B. M. Newhouse.

Photographs, slides, negatives, and copy prints depict LAAA events and gallery openings, artists and people, Executive Director Helen Wurdemann, and works of art by various artists. There are also photographs for publications and a photograph album of artwork by Douglass Parshall.

Ten scrapbooks document LAAA events and exhibitions through clippings, articles, photographs, notes and annotations, announcements, and printed materials.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged as 9 series. Records are generally arranged by material type and chronologically thereafter.

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Administrative Records, 1925-1989 (Box 1; 0.75 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1933-1990 (Boxes 1-2; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 3: Subject Files, 1924-1987 (Box 2; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 4: Exhibition Files, 1923-1982 (Boxes 2-3; 0.45 linear feet)
- Series 5: Artists' Files, 1926-1986 (Boxes 3-6; 3.6 linear feet)
- Series 6: Financial and Legal Records, 1932-1987 (Boxes 6-8; 1.6 linear feet)
- Series 7: Printed Material, 1922-1987 (Boxes 8-9; 1.5 linear feet)
- Series 8: Photographic Materials, 1925-1980 (Boxes 9-10, 13; 0.9 linear feet)
- Series 9: Scrapbooks, 1934-1985 (Boxes 10-12, 14; 2.8 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Exhibitions -- California -- Los Angeles
Artists -- California -- Los Angeles

Types of Materials:

Photographs
Scrapbooks
Visitors' books

Names:

Burkhardt, Hans Gustav, 1904-1994
Engel, Jules
George Eastman House
Kosa, Emil Jean, 1903-1968
Kuntz, Roger, 1926-1975
Macdonald-Wright, Stanton, 1890-1973
Menches, Arnold

Selz, Peter Howard, 1919-2019
Stendahl Art Galleries
Watts Towers Commission
Wurdemann, Helen
Zajac, Jack, 1929-

Functions:

Arts organizations -- California

Container Listing

Series 1: Administrative Records, 1925-1989

0.75 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Administrative records document the founding, history, and ongoing functions of the Los Angeles Art Association. Included is an address book and calendar, an award from the American Red Cross, as well as applications for employment with LAAA and applications for fellowships and various scholarships. Also found are board of trustees' meeting minutes, membership lists and membership materials, publicity materials, visitor and artist registers, materials relating to the history of the LAAA, by-laws, and articles of incorporation. Additionally, there are scattered materials relating to Executive Director Helen Wurdemann's activities over the course of her 40-year tenure, including an agenda book, address book, articles and clippings about Wurdemann, and obituary.

Arrangement: This series is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Box 1, Folder 1	Activity File, 1959-1983
Box 1, Folder 2	Address Book, 1969
Box 1, Folder 3	Agenda Book, 1983
Box 1, Folder 4	Applications, Employment , 1965-1974
Box 1, Folder 5	Applications, Scholarships and Fellowships, 1949-1986
Box 1, Folder 6	Award, American Red Cross, 1946
Box 1, Folder 7	By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation, and Prospectus, 1931-1933, 1962
Box 1, Folder 8	History of LAAA, 1934-1941
Box 1, Folder 9-13	Meeting Minutes, Board of Trustees, 1925-1983
Box 1, Folder 14	Membership Lists, 1955-1966
Box 1, Folder 15	Membership Materials and Request Letters, 1958-1973
Box 1, Folder 16	Publicity, Drafts and Annotated Articles, 1959-1962
Box 1, Folder 17	Publicity, LAAA Lecture Information, 1956-1981
Box 1, Folder 18-21	Visitor and Artist Registers, 1957-1971
Box 1, Folder 22	Helen Wunderman Articles , circa 1942-circa 1967
Box 1, Folder 23	Helen Wunderman Articles, Clippings, and Notes, 1954-1987

Box 1, Folder 24 Helen Wunderman Agenda Book, 1967

Box 1, Folder 25 Helen Wunderman Obituary, 1989

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1933-1990

0.5 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence consists primarily of letters, notes, and cards received from artists, galleries, and other art associations and organizations. Also included is correspondence regarding LAAA's Earl Mansion location near Otis Art Institute, as well as correspondence from the Unemployment Reserves Commission in 1938. Executive Director Helen Wurdemann also received many letters and cards of congratulations in 1954 for being honored for her work with LAAA at a Masquers Club banquet in Hollywood.

Box 1, Folder 26	Earl Property, 1938-1944
Box 1, Folder 27	Helen Wurdemann, Letters and Cards, 1954
Box 1, Folder 28	Unemployment Reserves Commission, 1938-1939
Box 1, Folder 29	Greeting Cards, 1964-1986
Box 1, Folder 30	General Correspondence, undated
Box 1, Folder 31	General Correspondence, 1933-1939
Box 1, Folder 32	General Correspondence, 1943-1950
Box 1, Folder 33	General Correspondence, 1951-1959
Box 2, Folder 1-5	General Correspondence, 1950-1990

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Series 3: Subject Files, 1924-1987

0.5 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Subject files covering a variety of special topics and projects were compiled by the LAAA and have been kept in their original order. There are files concerning the California Arts Council, a project to create a directory of artists in Southern California, other organizations and art associations, the Stendhal Gallery, California Landscape, and the Watts Tower Commission project. Individual files may include clippings, notes, lists, announcements, letters, photographs, newsletters, and brochures.

Arrangement: This series is arranged by subject.

Box 2, Folder 6	Artist List, Directory, undated
Box 2, Folder 7	California Arts Council, 1974-1976
Box 2, Folder 8	California Landscape, circa 1931
Box 2, Folder 9	Laguna Beach, circa 1930, 1976
Box 2, Folder 10	Los Angeles Art Museum Fund, 1962
Box 2, Folder 11	Los Angeles County Museum, 1924-1940
Box 2, Folder 12-13	Organizations, 1953-1985
Box 2, Folder 14	Prints to Order, 1968-1987
Box 2, Folder 15	Proposed Projects, undated
Box 2, Folder 16	Shana Cruse, L. A. County Art Museum Council, 1964-1969
Box 2, Folder 17	Show Photographers, 1980
Box 2, Folder 18	Southern California Academy of Fine Arts, 1937-1939
Box 2, Folder 19	Stendhal Gallery, 1930-1941
Box 2, Folder 20	Subjective Classicism, Post Surrealism, 1938-1941
Box 2, Folder 21	UCLA Art Council, 1957-1975
Box 2, Folder 22	Watts Towers Commission, 1960-1985

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Series 4: Exhibition Files, 1923-1982

0.45 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3)

Scope and Contents: Exhibition files are found for various LAAA exhibitions, including the 1937 "Loan Exhibition of International Art" which featured such works as Pablo Picasso's "Woman With Blue Turban," Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending the Stairs," and Salvador Dali's "L'eco Nostalgic," and saw more than 200,000 visitors; "Independent Artists of Los Angeles" (1923); "Top Flight Artists of Southern California" (1941); and others.

Box 2, Folder 23	"Independent Artists of Los Angeles" (1923), 1923
Box 2, Folder 24	"Whistler's 'Portrait of the Artist's Mother'" (1933), 1933
Box 2, Folder 25	"Loan Exhibition of International Art" (1937), 1937
Box 2, Folder 26	"Loan Exhibition of International Art" (1937), 1937
Box 2, Folder 27	"Top Flight Artists of Southern California" (1941), 1941
Box 2, Folder 28	"What's New" (1946), 1946-1947
Box 2, Folder 29	Photography Exhibitions, 1967-1968
Box 2, Folder 30-31	Various Exhibitions, undated, 1935
Box 3, Folder 1-5	Various Exhibitions, 1943-1982

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Series 5: Artists' Files, 1926-1986

3.6 Linear feet (Boxes 3-6)

Scope and Contents: Artist files contain a variety of materials, such as resumes, correspondence, exhibition catalogs, clippings, lists, announcements, photographs, and slides of work. Files are found for Hans Burkhardt, Charles P. Cross, Janet Culbertson, Jules Engel, Duane Loppnow, Michael O'Mara, Dorothy Orr, Richard Poole, Joseph D. Portanova, Carol Tolin, Antonio Tonon, and Jack Zajac, among others.

Arrangement: This series is arranged alphabetically by name of artist. Some files are devoted to a single artist, but most are devoted to multiple artists, and filed by letter of the alphabet.

Box 3, Folder 6	Artists' Biographical Information, A-B, circa 1950s-circa 1960s
Box 3, Folder 7	Artists' Biographical Information, C-G, circa 1960s
Box 3, Folder 8	Artists' Biographical Information, S-W, circa 1960s
Box 3, Folder 9-12	A, 1940s-1970s
Box 3, Folder 13-17	B, 1929-1986
Box 3, Folder 18	Brigante, Nick, 1963-1985
Box 3, Folder 19	Burkhardt, Hans, 1957-1966
Box 3, Folder 20-22	C, circa 1930-1983
Box 3, Folder 23	Cross, Charles P., 1964-1970
Box 3, Folder 24	Culbertson, Janet, 1966-1973
Box 4, Folder 1-3	D, circa 1934-circa 1980
Box 4, Folder 4-5	E, circa 1935-circa 1978
Box 4, Folder 6	Engel, Jules, 1960-1975
Box 4, Folder 7-9	F, 1928-1980
Box 4, Folder 10-13	G, 1930-circa 1978
Box 4, Folder 14-16	H, 1928-1980
Box 4, Folder 17	I, 1936-1976
Box 4, Folder 18-20	J, 1931-1980
Box 4, Folder 21-23	K, 1931-1981

Box 5, Folder 1-3	L, 1926-1979
Box 5, Folder 4	Lopnow, Duane, circa 1970s
Box 5, Folder 5-6	M, 1929-1981
Box 5, Folder 7-8	N, 1934-1979
Box 5, Folder 9	O, 1928-1982
Box 5, Folder 10	O'Mara, Michael, 1963-1970
Box 5, Folder 11	Orr, Dorothy, 1974-1978
Box 5, Folder 12-15	P, 1929-1979
Box 5, Folder 16	Poole, Richard, 1966-1973
Box 5, Folder 17	Portanova, Joseph D., 1956-1974
Box 5, Folder 18	Q, 1966-1977
Box 5, Folder 19-20	R, 1930-1977
Box 5, Folder 21	Reep, Edward, 1975
Box 6, Folder 1-6	S, 1928-1982
Box 6, Folder 7-8	T, 1961-1979
Box 6, Folder 9	Tolin, Carol, 1974-1980
Box 6, Folder 10	Tonon, Antonio, 1968-1973
Box 6, Folder 11	V, 1932-1973
Box 6, Folder 12-16	W, circa 1929-circa 1980
Box 6, Folder 17	Y, 1958-1964
Box 6, Folder 18	Z, undated, 1967
Box 6, Folder 19	Zajac, Jack, 1967-1977

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Series 6: Financial and Legal Records, 1932-1987

1.6 Linear feet (Boxes 6-8, 13)

Scope and Contents: Financial and legal records include financial and exhibition ledgers, receipts and bills paid, an audit report, financial notes, art loan paperwork, and art rental/sales paperwork.

Arrangement: This series is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Box 6, Folder 20	Art Rental Gallery Reports, 1965-1966
Box 6, Folder 21-23	Art Rental and Sales Paperwork, 1947-1972
Box 7, Folder 1-2	Art Rental and Sales Paperwork, 1967-1982
Box 7, Folder 3	Audit Report and Financial Statements, 1936, 1960-1961
Box 7, Folder 4	Bankruptcy Legal Papers, 1977-1979
Box 7, Folder 5	Billing Receipts, 1962-1987
Box 7, Folder 6-14	Ledgers, Exhibition Logs, 1954-1982
Box 7, Folder 15-21	Ledgers, 1933-1966 Notes: Oversized ledger housed in Box 13
Box 8, Folder 1-7	Ledgers, 1967-1980
Box 8, Folder 8	Miscellaneous Financial Notes, 1952-1978
Box 8, Folder 9	Monthly Bills Paid, 1932-1935
Box 8, Folder 10	Prints Price List, circa 1964
Box 13	Oversized Ledger from Box 7, 1960-1961

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Series 7: Printed Material, 1922-1987

1.5 Linear feet (Boxes 8-9)

Scope and Contents: Printed material includes art museum and gallery bulletins, art school catalogs and brochures, clippings mentioning LAAA as well as general clippings, gallery exhibition announcements, organization bulletins and newsletters, periodicals and magazines, as well as unannotated proof sheets for the catalog of the "Loan Exhibition of International Art" (1937). Also included is a limited edition print of the book, *Paintings* by William Merritt Chase signed to LAAA by B. M. Newhouse.

Arrangement: This series is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Box 8, Folder 11	Paintings by William Merritt Chase, 1927
Box 8, Folder 12	Bulletins, Art Institute of Chicago, 1944-1954
Box 8, Folder 13	Bulletins, City Art Museum of St. Louis, Los Angeles County Museum, and Museum of Modern Art, 1943-1959
Box 8, Folder 14	Bulletins, Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968-1979
Box 8, Folder 15	Bulletins, Honolulu Academy of Arts, 1945-1951
Box 8, Folder 16	Bulletins, Los Angeles Art Association, 1934-1937
Box 8, Folder 17	Bulletins, Philadelphia Museum, 1940-1961
Box 8, Folder 18	Catalogs and Brochures, Art Schools, 1925-1976
Box 8, Folder 19	Clippings, LAAA and Galleries, 1930-1961
Box 8, Folder 20	Clippings, LAAA Exhibitions, 1957-1966
Box 8, Folder 21	Clippings, Stendhal Gallery, 1924-1941
Box 8, Folder 22-25	Clippings, 1922-1987
Box 9, Folder 1-3	Clippings, 1926-1984
Box 9, Folder 4	Gallery Exhibition Announcements, 1958-1971
Box 9, Folder 5-7	Miscellaneous Printed Material, Galleries, 1935-1986
Box 9, Folder 8-11	Museum Exhibition Catalogs, undated, 1928-1984
Box 9, Folder 12-14	Organization Bulletins and Newsletters, 1927, 1959-1986
Box 9, Folder 15-16	Periodicals, 1936-1977

Box 9, Folder 17

Proofs, Exhibition Catalog ("Loan Exhibition of International Art"), 1937

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Series 8: Photographs, 1925-1980

0.9 Linear feet (Boxes 9-10, 13)

Scope and Contents: Photographic materials consist of black and white original photographs, copy prints, color snapshots, safety negatives, color slides, and a photograph album. Most of the photographs are of works of art. There are also images of LAAA events and exhibition openings, Helen Wurdemann, artists and other persons, as well as photographs intended for publications. There are images of artwork in the William Preston Harrison Collection and one photograph album containing photographs of portraits by Douglass Parshall.

Arrangement: This series is arranged by subject.

Box 9, Folder 18-20	LAAA Events and Gallery Openings, circa 1954-1974 Notes: Oversized photographs housed in Box 13
Box 9, Folder 21	Photographs of Helen Wurdemann, undated, 1954-1974
Box 9, Folder 22	Artists and People, circa 1950s-circa 1960s
Box 9, Folder 23	Los Angeles County Museum, "New" Building Rendering, 1961
Box 9, Folder 24	Photographs for Publications, circa 1966
Box 10	Photographs of Works of Art
Box 10, Folder 1	Maud Dagget, circa 1930
Box 10, Folder 2	Roger Kuntz, 1949-1952
Box 10, Folder 3	David Leneman, circa 1949
Box 10, Folder 4	Douglas McClellan, undated
Box 10, Folder 5	Warren Newcombe, circa 1930s
Box 10, Folder 6	Art Starr, undated
Box 10, Folder 7	William Preston Harrison Collection, circa 1925-circa 1930s
Box 10, Folder 8	William M. Chase, 1925-1934
Box 10, Folder 9	Donated to LAAA, 1934-1935
Box 10, Folder 10	For Publication, undated
Box 10, Folder 11-17	Artwork, undated, 1933-1978 Notes: Oversized photographs housed in Box 13
Box 13	Oversized Douglass Parshall Photo Album, Artwork, circa 1934

Box 13 Oversized Photographs, Artwork from Box 10, undated

Box 13 Oversized Photographs, LAAA Events and Gallery Openings from Box 9,
1966

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Series 9: Scrapbooks, 1934-1985

2.8 Linear feet (Boxes 10-12, 14)

Scope and Contents: This series includes 10 scrapbooks of clippings, gallery announcements and exhibitions, correspondence, photographs, and notes and annotations.

Arrangement: This series is arranged chronologically according to original order. Some scrapbooks have been disassembled and kept in their original order, while others have been kept intact.

Box 10, Folder 18-20	Scrapbook, 1933-1934
Box 10, Folder 21-24	Scrapbook, 1941-1946
Box 14	Scrapbook, 1946-1951
Box 11	Scrapbook, 1951-1955
Box 11	Scrapbook, 1956-1959
Box 11	Scrapbook, 1961-1974
Box 11	Scrapbook, 1975-1985
Box 12	Scrapbook, 1960
Box 12	Scrapbook, 1960-1969
Box 12	Scrapbook, 1960-1975

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