A Finding Aid to the Marcia Marcus Papers, 1928-2016, bulk 1950-2000, in the Archives of American Art

Hilary Price and Rihoko Ueno

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection was provided by the family of Marcia Marcus, and the Lily and Earle M. Pilgrim Art Foundation.

2017 May 9
# Table of Contents

Collection Overview ........................................................................................................ 1
Administrative Information .............................................................................................. 1
Scope and Contents............................................................................................................ 3
Arrangement..................................................................................................................... 3
Biographical / Historical .................................................................................................... 2
Names and Subjects .......................................................................................................... 3
Container Listing .............................................................................................................. 5
  Series 1: Biographical Material, 1928-2000s........................................................... 5
  Series 2: Correspondence, 1948-2016....................................................................... 7
  Series 4: Writings, 1970s-2014.............................................................................. 21
  Series 5: Project Files, 1962-circa 2000................................................................. 22
  Series 7: Printed Material, 1950s-1990s................................................................. 25
  Series 8: Photographic Material, 1950s-1990s....................................................... 27
  Series 9: Sketchbooks, circa 1954-2000................................................................. 30
  Series 10: Artwork, 1950s-1990s............................................................................... 31
Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art  
Title: Marcia Marcus papers  
Identifier: AAA.marcmarc  
Date: 1928-2016  
(bulk 1950-2000)  
Extent: 0.389 Gigabytes  
8.42 Linear feet  
Creator: Marcus, Marcia, 1928-  
Language: Collection is in English  
Summary: The papers of New York painter and educator Marcia Marcus measure 8.42 linear feet and .389 gigabytes (1 computer file), and date from 1928-2016, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1950-2000. The papers include biographical material, correspondence, interviews, writings (including two diaries), project files, personal business records, printed material, photographic material, eight sketchbooks, and artwork. Extensive personal and professional correspondence is with her husband and close friends, galleries, museums, and other arts organizations. Notable correspondents include Sally Avery, Dody Müller, and Robert (Bob) Richenburg, and, to a lesser extent, Dorothy Gill Barnes, Elaine Benson, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, and Myron Stout. Photographic material includes photographs of Marcus at all stages of her life and photographs and slides documenting her paintings.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information  
Marcia Marcus donated her papers in multiple increments between 1974-1984. Her daughter Kate Prendergast donated additional papers in 2016.

Related Materials  
Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Marcia Marcus conducted by Paul Cummings in 1975.

Available Formats  
The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2018 and is available on the Archives of American Art website. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages, blank versos of photographs, and duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages digitized.
Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Hilary Price in 2017. The collection was fully processed, prepared for digitization, and described in the finding aid by Rihoko Ueno in 2018 with funding provided by the family of Marcia Marcus, and the Lily and Earle M. Pilgrim Art Foundation.

Preferred Citation


Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Use of archival audiovisual recordings and born-digital records with no duplicate copy requires advance notice.

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Biographical / Historical

Marcia Marcus (1928- ) is a figurative painter working in New York, New York.

Born in New York City, Marcus earned her bachelor's degree in fine arts from New York University in 1949, studied at the Cooper Union from 1950-1952, and studied at the Art Students League with Edwin Dickinson in 1954. In 1951, Marcus exhibited her first painting in a group exhibition at Roko Gallery in New York City. Since then, she has been the subject of over a dozen solo shows and participated in many group exhibitions.

Marcus had an exhibition of self-portraits (1960) at the Delancey Street Museum, where the artist Red Grooms, one of her many friends in the art world, was one of the founders. She also directed and performed a "Happening" there. In 1961, Marcus studied Byzantine and fresco painting in Florence, Italy. She then traveled to France from 1962-1963 on a Fulbright fellowship, and was the recipient of many other grants throughout her career including a Esther and Adolph Gottlieb grant and a National Endowment for the Arts grant. Marcus has taught as a visiting artist at a number of colleges and universities, including Vassar College, New York University, and Purdue University.

Marcus married Terrence (Terry) Barrell in 1959 and they have two children, Kate and Jane.
Scope and Contents

The papers of New York painter and educator Marcia Marcus measure 8.42 linear feet and .389 gigabytes (1 computer file), and date from 1928-2016, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1950-2000. The papers include biographical material, correspondence, interviews, writings (including two diaries), project files, personal business records, printed material, photographic material, eight sketchbooks, and artwork.

Biographical material includes address books, diplomas, certificates, identification documents, resumes, and other material.

Extensive personal and professional correspondence is with Marcia Marcus's husband and close friends, galleries, museums, and other arts organizations. Notable correspondents include Sally Avery, Dody Müller, and Robert (Bob) Richenburg, and, to a lesser extent, Dorothy Gill Barnes, Elaine Benson, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, and Myron Stout.

Interviews include 2 sound cassettes and a few transcripts. Writings by Marcia Marcus consist of diaries, artist statements, notebooks, notes, lists and poems. There are also a few writings by others about Marcus. Project files mostly consist of grant applications, a mail art project, information on exhibitions curated by Marcus, and other material.

Personal business records include receipts, ledgers, prices lists, leases, and other documentation. Photographic material includes photographs of Marcus at all stages of her life and photographs and slides documenting her paintings. There are eight sketchbooks and artwork, mostly in the form of small sketches and watercolors.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as ten series

• Series 1: Biographical Material, 1928-2000s (0.7 linear feet; Box 1, OV 9)
• Series 2: Correspondence, 1948-2016 (4.0 linear feet; Box 1-5)
• Series 3: Interviews, 1970s-1980 (3 folders; Box 5)
• Series 4: Writings, 1970s-2014 (0.3 linear feet; Box 5)
• Series 5: Project Files, 1962-circa 2000 (0.2 linear feet; Box 5-6)
• Series 6: Personal Business Records, 1960s-2000s (0.3 linear feet; Box 6)
• Series 7: Printed Material, 1950s-1990s (0.8 linear feet; Box 6-7, OV 10-11)
• Series 8: Photographic Material, 1950s-1990s (1.3 linear feet; Box 7-8)
• Series 9: Sketchbooks, circa 1954-2000 (0.3 linear feet; Box 8)
• Series 10: Artwork, 1950s-1990s (0.4 linear feet; Box 8, OV 12)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
Women painters -- New York (State) -- New York
Types of Materials:
Diaries
Interviews
Photographs
Sketchbooks

Names:
Avery, Sally
Barnes, Dorothy Gill, 1927-
Benson, Elaine
De Kooning, Elaine
Hartigan, Grace
Müller, Dody
Richenburg, Robert
Stout, Myron, 1908-1987

Occupations:
Art teachers -- New York (State) -- New York
Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1928-2000s

0.7 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 9)

Biographical material dates from 1928-2000s and consists of address books, calendars, diplomas, certificates, life documents, identification cards, and resumes. A few files relate to Marcus’s parents and include marriage certificates and naturalization papers. Travel mementos and memorabilia contain maps, tickets, and other items of ephemera saved by Marcus. One file relates to Marcus' teaching activities at Vassar College.

The material in this series is arranged alphabetically.

The bulk of this series was digitized, except for duplicates and blank pages of address books. Only the cover and relevant pages of the yearbook were digitized.

Box 1, Folder 1  Addresses and Address Books, 1970s-1990s
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 2  Addresses and Address Books, 1970s-1990s
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 3  Addresses and Address Books, 1970s-1990s
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 4  Calendars, 1970, 1981
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 5  Calendars, 1982-circa 1983
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 6  Diplomas and Certificates, 1940-1984
    Image(s)
    Oversized item housed in OV 9

Box 1, Folder 7  Faculty Evaluations, Vassar College, 1973-1974
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 8  Family, Parents, 1930-1985
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 9  High School Yearbook, 1943
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 10 Life Documents and Identification Documents, 1928-2000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 11</th>
<th>Memorabilia, circa 1940-1978</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 12</td>
<td>Natal Chart, circa 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 13</td>
<td>Report Cards, 1934-1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 14</td>
<td>Resumes, 1960s-2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 15</td>
<td>Travel Mementos, 1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box OV 9</td>
<td>Oversized Diploma digitized with material from Box 1, Folder 6, 1947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Series 2: Correspondence, 1948-2016

*4 Linear feet (Box 1-5)*
*0.389 Gigabytes (ER01)*

Personal and professional correspondence dates from 1953-2016 and includes illustrated letters, postcards, greeting cards, and memoranda. There is correspondence with her husband, children, and close friends, and letters from galleries, museums, and other arts organizations. Notable correspondents include Sally Avery, Dody Müller, Robert (Bob) Richenburg, as well as Dorothy Gill Barnes, Elaine Benson, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, and Myron Stout. One digital video recording found among the correspondence with Kate Prendergast, Marcus' daughter, documents the storage of Marcus' paintings.

Marcia Marcus's letter drafts and letters to unidentified recipients are at the beginning of the series. The rest of the series is arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Correspondents with first names only are grouped separately at toward the end of the series, followed by letters from unidentified correspondents, and greeting cards.

The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for duplicates and two folders of greeting cards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 16</th>
<th>Marcia Marcus Letters Drafts and Unidentified Recipients, circa 1962-circa 1984</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 17</td>
<td>Agriss, Pearl, 1986-1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 18</td>
<td>Alan, Charles, 1962-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 19</td>
<td>American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, 1981-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 20</td>
<td>Anderson, Lennart and Mimi, circa 1958-circa 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 21</td>
<td>Archives of American Art, 1974-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 22</td>
<td>Art in Embassies Program, United States Department of State, 1990-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 23</td>
<td>Avery, Sally, circa 1960-1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 24</td>
<td>Ac-An, Miscellaneous, 1973-2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 25</td>
<td>Ar-At, Miscellaneous, 1974-1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 1, Folder 26  Barber, Leila, 1974-1982
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 27  Barrell, Terry - Undated, circa 1961-1962
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 28  Barrell, Terry - Undated, circa 1970-circa 1979
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 29  Barrell, Terry, 1961-1962
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 30  Barrell, Terry, 1970-1982
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 31  Beauchamp, Bob and Jackie, 1954-1980
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 32  Beauchamp, Nadine (Valenti), 1970-1980
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 33  Belvo, Hazel, 1973-1983
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 34  Bloedel, Lawrence, 1971-1977
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 35  Bloomsburg State College, 1975-1976
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 36  Bonanno, Joseph A., 1976-1983
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 37  Bradley, Norma, 1979-1986
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 38  Ba-Be, Miscellaneous, 1972-1992
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 1  Bi-Bu, Miscellaneous, 1970-1983
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 2  Campbell, Mary, 1975-1980
Box 2, Folder 3  Carroll, Eugene, 1973-1983
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 4  Chambers, Karen S., 1981-1982
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 5  Cohen, Jean, 1957-1974
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 6  College of the Mainland, 1983-1984
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 7  Cooper Union, 1972-1982
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 8  Cornell University, 1974-1981
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 9  Cummings, Paul, 1980-1988
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 10  Curry, Eric, 1953-1983
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 11  Ca-Ci, Miscellaneous, 1957-1997
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 12  Ci-Cu, Miscellaneous, 1973-1996
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 13  Daly, Emmy "Lu", 1956-1957
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 14  De Groot, Pat, 1967-1977
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 15  De Kooning, Elaine, 1975-1983
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 16  Dickinson, Edwin, 1954-1967
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 17  Donnelly, Lucy and Bill, 1968-1971
Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 18  D, Miscellaneous, 1968-2005
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 19  Everson Museum of Art, 1975-1981
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 20  E, Miscellaneous, 1974-1997
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 21  Fine, Elsa Honig, 1978-1980
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 22  Feitelson, Freida (mother), 1948-1979
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 23  Feitelson, Frieda (mother), 1980-1985
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 24  Fleurant, Leo, circa 1971-1972
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 25  Fleurant, Leo, circa 1973-1975
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 26  Fleurant, Leo, 1976-1977
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 27  Fleurant, Leo, 1978-1979
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 28  Fleurant, Leo, 1980-1981
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 29  Fleurant, Leo, 1982
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 30  Fleurant, Leo, 1983-1984
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 31  F, Miscellaneous, 1958-1995
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 32  Gardere, Marcia (née Green), 1969-1971
Box 2, Folder 33  Gilcock, Ruth, 1956-1963
Box 2, Folder 34  Gill, Jill, 1971-1973
Box 2, Folder 35  Gordin, Sidney, 1958-1981
Box 2, Folder 36  Griffin, Irma Mae, 1970-1971
Box 2, Folder 37  Grooms, Red and Mimi, 1960-1978
Box 2, Folder 38  Grossman, Barbara, 1990-1991
Box 2, Folder 39  Guild Hall, 1981-1986
Box 2, Folder 40  Ga-Gl, Miscellaneous, 1971-2005
Box 2, Folder 41  Go-Gw, Miscellaneous, 1969-2013
Box 2, Folder 42  Harris, Ann Sutherland, 1974-1993
Box 2, Folder 43  Herlitz, Barbara and Clyde, 1969-1979
Box 2, Folder 44  Hirshhorn, Joseph and Olga, 1968-1990
Box 2, Folder 45  Hirshhorn Museum, 1974-1987
Box 2, Folder 46  Howard, Seymour, 1959-1993
Box 2, Folder 47  Ha-Hi, Miscellaneous, 1966-1990
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 48</th>
<th>Hob-How, Miscellaneous, 1976-2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 1</td>
<td>Hu-Hy, Miscellaneous, 1958-1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 2</td>
<td>Institute of International Education, 1974-1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 3</td>
<td>I, Miscellaneous, 1974-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 4</td>
<td>Jacobs, Peter, 1983-1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 5</td>
<td>Jill, circa 1970-circa 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 6</td>
<td>John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, 1973-1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 7</td>
<td>J, Miscellaneous, 1970-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 8</td>
<td>Knipe, Judy, 1959-1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 9</td>
<td>K, Miscellaneous, 1966-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 10</td>
<td>Larned, Eleni, 1964-1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 11</td>
<td>Loris, Annie, 1987-1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 12</td>
<td>Lyles, Jerry, 1990-1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 13</td>
<td>L, Miscellaneous, 1970-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 14</td>
<td>Marindin, Hope, 1972-1977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 12 of 31
Box 3, Folder 15  Marlowe, Willie, 1985-1989

Box 3, Folder 16  Maurice M. Pine Free Public Library, 1979-1981

Box 3, Folder 17  Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1977-1988

Box 3, Folder 18  Morrison, George, 1974-1988

Box 3, Folder 19  Morrison, George, 1988-1999

Box 3, Folder 20  Muller, Dody, 1963-1994

Box 3, Folder 21  Muto, Anthony, 1965-1976

Box 3, Folder 22  Ma-Mc, Miscellaneous, 1970-1991

Box 3, Folder 23  Me-Mu, Miscellaneous, 1966-1990

Box 3, Folder 24  Nadelman, Richard, 1981-1983

Box 3, Folder 25  National Portrait Gallery, 1979-1993

Box 3, Folder 26  Noel, 1975-1995

Box 3, Folder 27  N, Miscellaneous, 1965-1997

Box 3, Folder 28  Ohio State University, 1979-1990

Box 3, Folder 29  Oliver, Richard, 1974-1998
Box 3, Folder 30  Olson, Ruth Ann, 1980-1981

Box 3, Folder 31  O, Miscellaneous, 1972-1990

Box 3, Folder 32  Philadelphia Civic Center, 1974

Box 3, Folder 33  Pilgrim, Lily, 1983-2013

Box 3, Folder 34  Pinkerson, Harry, 1962-1977

Box 3, Folder 35  Pitari, Jody, 1973-1980

Box 3, Folder 36  Poirier, Elfi, 1955-1980

Box 3, Folder 37  Prendergast, Kate (daughter) - Undated, circa 1970-circa 1985

Box 3, Folder 38  Prendergast, Kate (daughter), circa 1972-1973

Box 3, Folder 39  Prendergast, Kate (daughter), 1974

Box 3, Folder 40  Prendergast, Kate (daughter), 1975-1980

Box 3, Folder 41  Prendergast, Kate (daughter), 1981-1983

Box 3, Folder 42  Prendergast, Kate (daughter), 1987-2016

Box ER01  Digital Video Recording from Kate Prendergast to Marcia Marcus, 2010

Box 4, Folder 1  Prescott, Kenneth W., 1974
Box 4, Folder 2  Provincetown Art Association, 1977-1993
Box 4, Folder 3  Purdue University, 1976
Box 4, Folder 4  Pa-Ph, Miscellaneous, 1955-1990
Box 4, Folder 5  Pi-Pu, Miscellaneous, 1961-2006
Box 4, Folder 6  Q, Miscellaneous, 1975-1982
Box 4, Folder 7  Rachel, 1971-1977
Box 4, Folder 8  Randolph-Macon Woman's College (Mary Williams), 1972-1981
Box 4, Folder 9  Recommendations for Marcia Marcus, 1985-1991
Box 4, Folder 10  Rhode Island School of Design, 1977-1978
Box 4, Folder 11  Richenburg, Bob and Marggy, 1984-1988
Box 4, Folder 12  R, Miscellaneous, 1971-2008
Box 4, Folder 13  Sahlman, B., 1969-1976
Box 4, Folder 14  Saks, Judy - Undated, circa 1973-circa 1992
Box 4, Folder 15  Saks, Judy, 1973-1981
Box 4, Folder 16  Saks, Judy, 1982-1992
Box 4, Folder 17  Salwen, Lynn, 1969-1971
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 18  Samaras, Lucas, 1965-1976
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 19  Shoemaker, Innis, 1974-1981
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 20  Stout, Myron, 1966-1986
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 21  Syracuse University, 1970-1990
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 22  Sa-Se, Miscellaneous, 1960-1985
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 23  Sh-Sw, Miscellaneous, 1966-circa 1990
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 24  Tannenbaum, Dolores - Undated, circa 1967-circa 1982
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 25  Tannenbaum, Dolores, 1967-1970
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 26  Tannenbaum, Dolores, 1971-1973
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 27  Tannenbaum, Dolores, 1974-1977
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 28  Tannenbaum, Dolores, 1978-1982
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 29  Tausik-Pinto, Joan, 1984
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 30  Terry Dintefass, Inc., 1978-1980
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 31  Thompson, Ed G., 1975-1978
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 32  T, Miscellaneous, 1971-2009
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 33  University of Arizona, 1979-1986
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 34  University of Colorado, Boulder, 1979-1993
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 35  University of Georgia, 1974-1994
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 36  University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1979-1988
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 37  University of Maryland, College Park, 1983-1984
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 38  University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, 1975-1984
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 39  University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 1974-1986
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 40  University of Pennsylvania, 1982-1983
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 41  University of Texas, Austin, 1976-1980
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 42  "University of," A-M, 1974-1994
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 43  "University of," N-W, 1973-1992
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 44  Upshaw, Lois, 1972-1974
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 45  U, Miscellaneous, 1974-1982
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 46  Vanderwoude, Mike and Sue, 1969-1970
Box 4, Folder 47  Vassar College, 1973-1982
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 48  Vevers, Elspeth and Tabitha and Tony, 1970-1980
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 49  Virginia Miller Galleries, 1977-1984
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 50  V, Miscellaneous, 1977-1981
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 51  Wade-Day, Van, 1984-1987
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 52  Wheaton College, 1978-1980
Image(s)

Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 54  Wichita State University, 1974-1979
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 55  Women's Interart Center, 1973-1977
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 56  W, Miscellaneous, 1962-1988
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 57  Yadav, Jane (daughter) - Undated, circa 1970-circa 1990
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 58  Yadav, Jane (daughter), 1970-1975
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 59  Yadav, Jane (daughter), 1976-1979
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 60  Yadav, Jane (daughter), 1980-1981
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 1  Yadav, Jane (daughter), 1982-1990
Box 5, Folder 2  
Yadav, Jane (daughter), 2001-2014

Box 5, Folder 3  
Y-Z, Miscellaneous, 1969-1983

Box 5, Folder 4  
First Names, A-C, circa 1975-1983

Box 5, Folder 5  
First Names, D-G, circa 1970-circa 1983

Box 5, Folder 6  
First Names, H-L, circa 1969-circa 1983

Box 5, Folder 7  
First Names, M-O, 1954-1983

Box 5, Folder 8  
First Names, P-R, 1956-1974

Box 5, Folder 9  
First Names, S-Y, circa 1971-circa 1983

Box 5, Folder 10  
Unidentified Correspondence - Undated, circa 1958-circa 1983

Box 5, Folder 11  
Unidentified Correspondence, 1958-1983

Box 5, Folder 12  
Loose Envelopes, circa 1961-circa 1983

Box 5, Folder 13  
Greeting Cards, circa 1970-circa 2009

Box 5, Folder 14  
Greeting Cards, circa 1970-circa 2009

Return to Table of Contents

3 Folders (Box 5)

Interviews date from 1970s-1980 and include one sound recordings with Marcus on sound cassette and two transcripts. Marcus responds to questions regarding her paintings, her influences, the art scene in New York City, her role as an educator, and other topics. There is also one sound recording on cassette of an interview with the artist Rose Mosner.

The Marcia Marcus interviews are first, followed by the Rose Mosner interview at the end of the series.

The transcripts in this series have been digitized. The sound cassettes have not been digitized.

Box 5, Folder 15 Marcia Marcus Interview by Unknown Interviewer, Sound Recording, 1970s
1 Sound cassette

Box 5, Folder 16 Marcia Marcus Interview by Elizabeth Yaroz, Transcript, 1980
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 17 Marcia Marcus Interview by Unknown Interviewer, Transcript, 1980
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 18 Rose Mosner Interview, Sound Recording, 1970s
1 Sound cassette
Series 4: Writings, 1970s-2014

0.3 Linear feet (Box 5)

Writings date from 1970s-2014 and consist of artist statements, two diaries, two notebooks, notes, lists, poems, and a few writings by others. The diaries record day-to-day activities and reflections, while the notebooks contain jottings, notes, and lists. The writings by others are mostly essays about Marcia Marcus written by others.

The material in this series is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for duplicates.

Box 5, Folder 19  Artist Statements, circa 1970-circa 1997

Box 5, Folder 20  Diaries (2), circa 2012, 1990

Box 5, Folder 21  Notebooks (2), 2013, circa 1990

Box 5, Folder 22  Notes and Lists - Undated, circa 1980-2014

Box 5, Folder 23  Notes and Lists, 1975-2015

Box 5, Folder 24  Poems, 1980s

Box 5, Folder 25  Writings by Others, circa 1970-2003

Return to Table of Contents
Series 5: Project Files, 1962-circa 2000

0.2 Linear feet (Box 5-6)

Project files date from 1960s-1990s and contain material related to exhibitions Marcus curated, grant applications, a mail art project, and a collaborative proposal for an exhibition space called Sister Chapel.

The material in this series is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for duplicates.

Box 5, Folder 26  Exhibitions Curated by Marcia Marcus, circa 1980-1986
  Image(s)

  Grant Applications

Box 5, Folder 27  Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, 1983-1997
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 28  City Arts, Inc., 1996-1998
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 29  Fulbright Foundation, 1962-circa 1992
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 30  John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, circa 1983-circa 1991
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 31  Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation, 1994-1996
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 32  National Endowment for the Arts, 1983-1993
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 33  Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 1988-1999
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 34  Grants, A-H, 1975-2000
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 35  Grants, L-U, 1994-2000
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 36  Miscellaneous Grants, circa 1970-circa 2000
  Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 1  Mail Art Project, First Issue Stamps, 1986-1995

0.3 Linear feet (Box 6)

Personal business records date from 1960s-2000s and consist of conservation documentation relating to Marcus' paintings, leases for residences and studios, financial ledgers, price lists for exhibitions, receipts for art supplies, loan agreements, contracts for exhibitions and teaching positions, as well as documentation related to unemployment benefits.

This series is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for duplicates and blank pages.

Box 6, Folder 3  Conservation, 1966-1984
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 4  Leases and Housing Documents, circa 1956-1980
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 5  Ledgers, circa 1982-1984
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 6  Price Lists, circa 1974-circa 1990
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 7  Receipts, Agreements, and Contracts, 1960-1969
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 8  Receipts, Agreements, and Contracts, 1970-1975
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 9  Receipts, Agreements, and Contracts, 1976-1979
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 10  Receipts, Agreements, and Contracts, 1980-1988
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 11  Receipts, Agreements, and Contracts, 1990-2007
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 12  Unemployment Documents, 1974-1976
Image(s)
Series 7: Printed Material, 1950s-1990s

0.8 Linear feet (Box 6-7, OV 10-11)

Printed material dates from 1950s-1990s and documents Marcus’ extensive exhibition history through announcements, clippings, and exhibition catalogs. A few newsletters and other printed matter consisting of programs, minutes, and sheet music are also found here.

This series has been arranged alphabetically by folder title.

The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for duplicates. Exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages digitized.

Box 6, Folder 13  Announcements - Undated, circa 1960-circa 1990  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 14  Announcements, 1957-1974  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 15  Announcements, 1975-1979  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 16  Announcements, 1980-1981  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 17  Announcements, 1982-2001  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 18  Clippings - Undated, circa 1960-circa 1995  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 19  Clippings, 1960-1969  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 20  Clippings, 1970-1977  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 21  Clippings, 1978-1979  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 22  Clippings, 1980-1996  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 23  Exhibition Catalogs, 1960-1964  Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 24  Exhibition Catalogs, 1966-1967
Box 6, Folder 25  Exhibition Catalogs, 1968-1969

Box 6, Folder 26  Exhibition Catalogs, 1970-1973

Box 6, Folder 27  Exhibition Catalogs, 1975-1976

Box 6, Folder 28  Exhibition Catalogs, 1977-1979
   Oversized catalog housed in OV 10

Box 6, Folder 29  Exhibition Catalogs, 1980-1983

Box 6, Folder 30  Exhibition Catalogs, 1984-1986

Box 7, Folder 1  Exhibition Catalogs, 1990-1996

Box 7, Folder 2  Newsletters, 1974-1980

Box 7, Folder 3  Other Printed Matter, 1969-circa 1990

Box 7, Folder 4  Posters, circa 1966-circa 1981
   Oversized posters housed in OV 11

Box OV 10  Oversized Exhibition Catalog digitized with material in Box 6, Folder 28, 1970s

Box OV 11  Oversized Posters digitized with Box 7, Folder 4, circa 1966-circa 1981
Series 8: Photographic Material, 1950s-1990s

1.3 Linear feet (Box 7-8)

Photographic material dates from 1950s-1990s and includes photographic prints, negatives, contact sheets, and slides. Subjects include Marcus at all stages of her life, family, friends, the studio, exhibitions, travel, as well as hundreds of photographs and slides documenting her paintings. One folder contains photographs Marcus used as source material. The snapshots of artwork document the progress of some of her paintings from early sketch to the final completed work, along with images of Marcia Marcus posing for paintings and some snapshots she used for reference. The disbound photograph album mostly contains photographs of Marcia Marcus's time in New York City during the early to mid-1950s, especially the time she spent with fellow artists, students, and teachers at the Art Students League.

This series consists of photographic material loosely grouped by subject. Photographs of Marcia Marcus are at the beginning of the series, followed by photographs of people, artwork, and places. The slides are not in any particular order.

The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for duplicates, negatives, and blank versos of photographs. Due to the sheer volume of snapshots of artwork, only a sampling from each batch of snapshots was digitized.

Box 7, Folder 5  Marcia Marcus, 1965-1995  
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 6  Marcia Marcus and Others, circa 1966-circa 1990  
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 7  Edwin Dickinson, circa 1967  
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 8  Friends and Family Photographs, 1922-circa 1981  
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 9  Friends and Family Snapshots, circa 1960-circa 1981  
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 10  Artwork Photographs - Undated, circa 1960-circa 1990  
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 11  Artwork Photographs, 1950-1955  
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 12  Artwork Photographs, 1956-1959  
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 13  Artwork Photographs, 1960-1964  
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 14  Artwork Photographs, 1965-1969
Box 7, Folder 15  Artwork Photographs, 1970-1974
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 16  Artwork Photographs, 1975-1979
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 17  Artwork Photographs, 1980-1984
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 18  Artwork Photographs, circa 1985-circa 1991
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 19  Artwork Snapshots, circa 1950-circa 2000
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 20  Artwork Snapshots, 1967-1997
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 21  Artwork Snapshots, 1972-1999
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 22  Artwork Snapshots, 1974-1995
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 23  Artwork Snapshots, 1974-1997
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 24  Artwork Snapshots, 1978-1999
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 25  Artwork Snapshots, 1980-1995
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 26  Artwork Snapshots, 1996-1999
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 27  Source Photographs and Studies for Paintings, circa 1970-circa 1995
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 28  Photo Album (disbound), 1954
Image(s)

Box 7, Folder 29  Photo Album (disbound), 1950s
Box 7, Folder 30  Photo Album (disbound), 1950s
Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 1  Exhibition Installations, 1975-1976
Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 2  Studio, 1959-1969
Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 3  Travel and Assorted Locations, circa 1963-circa 1989
Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 4  Negatives, Assorted Subjects, 1970s-1990s

Box 8, Folder 5  Negatives, Assorted Subjects, 1970s-1990s

Box 8, Folder 6  Negatives, Assorted Subjects, 1970s-1990s

Box 8, Folder 7  Slide Box, Assorted Subjects, 1970s-1990s
Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 8  Slide Box, Assorted Subjects, 1970s-1990s
Image(s)

Return to Table of Contents
Series 9: Sketchbooks, circa 1954-2000

0.3 Linear feet (Box 8)

Eight sketchbooks date from circa 1954-2000 and contain hundreds of sketches and studies in pencil, pen, and watercolor. Subjects include flora, fauna, landscapes, and figures. One sketchbook appears to be by Dody Muller.

The sketchbooks are loosely in chronological order.

The bulk of this series has been digitized, except for blank pages.

Box 8, Folder 9    Sketchbooks (2), 1954
                  Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 10   Sketchbook, circa 1960-1969
                  Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 11   Sketchbook (might be by Dody Muller), 1963
                  Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 12   Sketchbooks (2), 1992
                  Image(s)
                  One sketchbook is disbound and includes reference snapshots.

Box 8, Folder 13   Sketchbooks (2), circa 2000
                  Image(s)
Series 10: Artwork, 1950s-1990s

0.4 Linear feet (Box 8, OV 12)

Artwork dates from 1950s-1990s and includes sketches in pencil and marker, a collage, and over one hundred watercolor studies of flora, fauna, landscapes, and figures.

This series is loosely grouped by medium. Sketches come first, followed by watercolors, which are mostly undated.

This series has been digitized in its entirety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 8, Folder 14</th>
<th>Sketches and Collage, 1950s-1990s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oversized sketches and collage housed in OV 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 8, Folder 15</th>
<th>Watercolors, circa 1986-circa 1991</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 8, Folder 16</th>
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<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 8, Folder 17</th>
<th>Watercolors, circa 1989</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 8, Folder 18</th>
<th>Watercolors, circa 1989-circa 1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Box OV 12        | Oversized Sketches and Collage digitized with material from Box 8, Folder 14, 1950s-1990s |

*Return to Table of Contents*