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
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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: English
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.

Conditions Governing Use
The Marcia Marcus papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

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:
- Art teachers -- New York (State) -- New York
- 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
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
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Box 1, Folder 10 Life Documents and Identification Documents, 1928-2000
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<td>Box OV 9</td>
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</tr>
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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.

Box 1, Folder 16 Marcia Marcus Letters Drafts and Unidentified Recipients, circa 1962-circa 1984
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 17 Agriss, Pearl, 1986-1987
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 18 Alan, Charles, 1962-1969
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 19 American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, 1981-1990
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 20 Anderson, Lennart and Mimi, circa 1958-circa 1961
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Box 1, Folder 21 Archives of American Art, 1974-1996
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Box 1, Folder 22 Art in Embassies Program, United States Department of State, 1990-1996
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Box 1, Folder 23 Avery, Sally, circa 1960-1989
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Box 1, Folder 25 Ar-At, Miscellaneous, 1974-1996
Box 1, Folder 26  Barber, Leila, 1974-1982
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 27  Barrell, Terry - Undated, circa 1961-1962
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Box 1, Folder 28  Barrell, Terry - Undated, circa 1970-circa 1979
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Box 2, Folder 4  Chambers, Karen S., 1981-1982
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Box 2, Folder 5  Cohen, Jean, 1957-1974
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Box 2, Folder 7  Cooper Union, 1972-1982
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Box 2, Folder 8  Cornell University, 1974-1981
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Box 2, Folder 9  Cummings, Paul, 1980-1988
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Box 2, Folder 10  Curry, Eric, 1953-1983
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Box 2, Folder 11  Ca-Ci, Miscellaneous, 1957-1997
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Box 2, Folder 12  Ci-Cu, Miscellaneous, 1973-1996
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Box 2, Folder 13  Daly, Emmy "Lu", 1956-1957
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Box 2, Folder 14  De Groot, Pat, 1967-1977
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Box 2, Folder 15  De Kooning, Elaine, 1975-1983
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Box 2, Folder 16  Dickinson, Edwin, 1954-1967
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Box 2, Folder 17  Donnelly, Lucy and Bill, 1968-1971
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Box 2, Folder 19  
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Unidentified Correspondence - Undated, circa 1958-circa 1983  
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Box 5, Folder 11  
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Box 5, Folder 13  
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Box 5, Folder 14  
Greeting Cards, circa 1970-circa 2009

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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

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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
  Image(s)

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

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

Box 5, Folder 22  Notes and Lists - Undated, circa 1980-2014
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 23  Notes and Lists, 1975-2015
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 24  Poems, 1980s
  Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 25  Writings by Others, circa 1970-2003
  Image(s)

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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 Explanations Curated by Marcia Marcus, circa 1980-1986

   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
Box 6, Folder 2  Sister Chapel Proposal, 1974
Image(s)  

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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.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Box 6, Folder 3</th>
<th>Conservation, 1966-1984</th>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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<td>Leases and Housing Documents, circa 1956-1980</td>
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<td>Box 6, Folder 11</td>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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<td>Box 6, Folder 12</td>
<td>Unemployment Documents, 1974-1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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<td>Box 6, Folder 28</td>
<td>Exhibition Catalogs, 1977-1979</td>
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<td>Oversized catalog housed in OV 10</td>
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<td>Box 6, Folder 29</td>
<td>Exhibition Catalogs, 1980-1983</td>
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<td>Box 6, Folder 30</td>
<td>Exhibition Catalogs, 1984-1986</td>
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<td>Box 7, Folder 1</td>
<td>Exhibition Catalogs, 1990-1996</td>
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<td>Box 7, Folder 2</td>
<td>Newsletters, 1974-1980</td>
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<td>Box 7, Folder 3</td>
<td>Other Printed Matter, 1969-circa 1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 4</td>
<td>Posters, circa 1966-circa 1981</td>
</tr>
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<td>Oversized posters housed in OV 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box OV 10</td>
<td>Oversized Exhibition Catalog digitized with material in Box 6, Folder 28, 1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box OV 11</td>
<td>Oversized Posters digitized with Box 7, Folder 4, circa 1966-circa 1981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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
Image(s)

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)
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)

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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.

Box 8, Folder 14  Sketches and Collage, 1950s-1990s
Image(s)
Oversized sketches and collage housed in OV 12

Box 8, Folder 15  Watercolors, circa 1986-circa 1991
Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 16  Watercolors, circa 1988-circa 1992
Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 17  Watercolors, circa 1989
Image(s)

Box 8, Folder 18  Watercolors, circa 1989-circa 1991
Image(s)

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

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