



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the John McDonald
Moore Papers, 1948-2015, bulk
1968-1999, in the Archives of American Art

Jennifer E. Neal

2019/12/11

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/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Arrangement.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	4
Series 1: Biographical Material, 1948-2015.....	4
Series 2: Correspondence, 1959-1999.....	5
Series 3: Writings, circa 1960s-1986.....	6
Series 4: Teaching files, circa 1967-2000.....	7

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	John McDonald Moore papers
Identifier:	AAA.moorjohn
Date:	1948-2015 (bulk 1968-1999)
Creator:	Moore, John McDonald, 1919-1999
Extent:	21.5 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of art historian and educator John McDonald Moore measure 21.5 linear feet and date from 1948-2015, with the bulk dating from 1968-1999. Included are biographical material regarding Moore; his writings, including book proposals and lectures; correspondence regarding teaching and letters from students; voluminous notecards for lectures; and sound recordings of lectures.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated in 2018 by Debra Werblud, Moore's step-daughter.

Separated Materials

193 audio cassettes documenting 10 lecture courses taught by John McDonald Moore from 1971 through 1998 were transferred to the New School Libraries and Archives in 2019.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Jennifer E. Neal and Lewis Tio in 2019.

Preferred Citation

John McDonald Moore papers, 1948-2015. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

Researchers interested in accessing audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Terms of Use

The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning such rights and restrictions and it is the user's responsibility to determine whether rights or

restrictions exist and to obtain any necessary permission to access, use, reproduce and publish the collections. Please refer to the [Smithsonian's Terms of Use](#) for additional information.

Biographical / Historical

John McDonald Moore (1919-1999) was a lecturer in art history at the New School for Social Research in New York City from 1968 until his death in 1999. Moore was born in the state of Georgia, where he attended the High Museum School of Art. He served as an illustrator for the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. After the war he worked as an advertising illustrator in New York. In 1961, Moore realized his true vocation was teaching. He began teaching part time at New York University, and in 1968 became a lecturer in art history at the New School, where he continued to teach until his death. There he met his wife, Elaine R. (Bobbie) Werblud, who became Moore's teaching assistant in 1970. Werblud was instrumental in supporting Moore's work through her extensive logging of course lectures in notebooks, transcribing lectures on notecards, recording weekly lectures, and organizing trips to exhibitions and artist studios, as well as studies abroad. From 1968-1971 Moore earned a B.A. and M.A. in art history at Goddard College. Moore was an inspirational lecturer acclaimed by many New York artists who were his students, including Mary Frank and Ursula von Rydingsvard. The John McDonald Moore Memorial Lecture series at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics was established in his honor.

Scope and Contents

The papers of art historian and educator John McDonald Moore measure 21.5 linear feet and date from 1948-2015, with the bulk dating from 1968-1999. Included are biographical material regarding Moore; his writings, including book proposals and lectures; correspondence regarding teaching and letters from students; voluminous notecards for lectures; and sound recordings of lectures.

This collection documents Moore's career as an art historian and educator at the New School for Social Research and his contribution to understanding the New York Art Scene from the late 1960s through the 1990s. It also provides insight on Elaine R. (Bobbie) Werblud's long career as Moore's teaching assistant. Materials include Moore's academic transcripts and diplomas; resumes; a 1989 teaching award; certificates; correspondence related to his education and courses he taught at NYU's Liberal Arts Extension and the New School for Social Research; draft manuscripts; academic papers; book proposals; handwritten and typed lectures; lecture notebooks including lecture and research notes; lecture notebooks maintained by Werblud; lecture notecards documenting research for Moore's course lectures and hand written lectures; course descriptions; flyers; clippings; photographs; exams; enrollment lists; a sound recording of Moore's Memorial service; and sound recordings of a sample of Moore's lectures from circa 1969-1998.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 4 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1948-2015 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 2: Correspondence, 1959-1999 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 3: Writings, circa 1960s-1986 (0.8 linear feet, Box 1-2)
 - Series 4: Teaching Material, circa 1967-2000 (20.3 linear feet, Box 2-25)
-

Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:

Sound recordings

Names:

New School for Social Research (New York, N.Y.)
Werblud, Elaine R. (Bobbie)

Occupations:

Art historians -- New York (State) -- New York
Educators -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1948-2015

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material documents John McDonald Moore's education at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont and the Art Students League of New York; the John Moore Fund which supported his teaching endeavors; and the John McDonald Moore Memorial fund that was set up around the time of his death in 1999 that supports the Memorial Lecture Series at the New School. Materials include correspondence related to Moore's attendance at Goddard College, the John Moore Fund, a letter of recommendation for his wife, Elaine R. (Bobbie) Werblud, and the John McDonald Moore Memorial fund and Lectures; resumes; transcripts; a teaching award Moore received in 1989; certificates including Moore's 1948 honorable discharge from the United States Army and his New York State teaching certificate; two diplomas including Moore's Bachelor of Arts (1967) and Master of Arts (1972) degrees from Goddard College; and a sound recording of Moore's memorial service in 1999.

Box 1, Folder 1	Goddard College, 1958-1972
Box 1, Folder 2	John Moore Fund, 1979-1999
Box 1, Folder 3	John McDonald Moore Memorial, 1999 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 4	John McDonald Moore Memorial Fund and Lectures, 1979-2015
Box 1, Folder 5	Resumes, Transcripts, Certificate, Diplomas, 1948-1972
Box 1, Folder 6	Teaching Award, 1988-1989

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Correspondence, 1959-1999

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence documents John McDonald Moore's teaching career and his involvement with the Community Arts Council and the art and artist community in New York City. Materials include professional correspondence and course descriptions related to New School courses Moore taught or proposed; lectures Moore gave at Hofstra University; various exhibitions and lectures Moore visited and gave at different museums and academic institutions in New York City; and letters of condolence to his wife, Elaine R. (Bobbie) Werblud and some of the activities she participated in and duties she performed during her career as Moore's teaching assistant. Items of note include an illustrated letter from Mary Frank to Werblud.

Box 1, Folder 7	Community Arts Council, 1964-1965
Box 1, Folder 8-9	Elaine R. Werblud, 1975-1999
Box 1, Folder 10	Exhibitions and Lectures, 1987-1996
Box 1, Folder 11	Hofstra University, 1969-1975
Box 1, Folder 12-13	New School Courses, 1960-1998
Box 1, Folder 14-15	Professional, 1959-1997

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Writings, circa 1960s-1986

0.8 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Writings document John McDonald Moore's formal education and career as an art historian. Included are drafts of articles; academic papers; published articles; student papers; and a lecture-discussion program prepared by Paul Branch at NYU. Most of his writing is also reflected throughout his lecture materials from the New School including "Art and Social Change," "Social Determinations of Art Form," and "Symmetry and the Sense of Power." One article of note, "The Drawings of Mary Frank," is accompanied by an illustrated letter from Mary Frank to Moore.

Box 1, Folder 16	Articles, "The Drawings of Mary Frank", 1974-1986
Box 1, Folder 17	Drafts, "Art and Social Change", circa 1966
Box 1, Folder 18-19	Drafts, Articles, 1966-1967, undated
Box 1, Folder 20	Drafts, "Social Determinations of Art Form", circa 1966
Box 1, Folder 21-23	Drafts, "Symmetry and the Sense of Power", circa 1966
Box 1, Folder 24-25	Manuscripts, "Social Determination of Art Form", circa 1960s
Box 2, Folder 1	Manuscript, "The Polarization of Art", circa 1960s
Box 2, Folder 2	Published Articles, "Return of the Emotive", 1981-1984
Box 2, Folder 3	Student Papers, 1983
Box 2, Folder 4	"Ten Modern Artists," A lecture-discussion program prepared by Paul Branch, NYU, undated
Box 2, Folder 5	"The Death of Art", circa 1966

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Teaching files, circa 1967-2000

20.3 Linear feet (Box 2-12, 22-25)

- Scope and Contents:** The bulk of the collection, teaching files document John McDonald Moore's career as an art historian and educator at the New School for Social Research from 1968-1999, and Elaine R. (Bobbie) Werblud's career as Moore's teaching assistant beginning in 1970. Materials include correspondence, course descriptions, enrollment lists, and bibliographies from the New School and one folder from NYU's Liberal Arts Extension; clippings; flyers; pamphlets; a 1967 annual meeting address from the National Science Teachers Association; exams; discussion questions; typed and handwritten lectures; color and black and white photographs and slides depicting Moore giving lectures in the classroom, on exhibition tours with students, and with study abroad groups; a sample of sound recordings of Moore's New School lectures from circa 1969-1998; Moore's lecture and research notebooks that document research for lectures and scholarly publications; lecture notebooks logged by Werblud that document Moore's lectures beginning in 1970; and Moore's notecards that document Moore's lecture research from 1968-1999, including a small group of handwritten lectures. The handwritten lectures were written by Moore and transcribed more legibly by Werblud, and housed in small wooden notecard boxes that were inscribed on the bottom with Moore's full name and the date ranges for the lectures. Lecture sound recordings and notebooks are arranged chronologically, and the notecards are arranged by subject. Also included with the notecards are photographs and snapshots from Moore's U.S. and European travels. These images show physical environments that have changed over time. Moore never gave the same lecture twice. His extensive research was compiled in notecards which comprised of ideas that were inspired by readings and visits to museums, galleries, and artist studios. Moore would pull notecards to create his lectures along with accompanying slides that provided visual documentation to support the lectures. Topics included periods, movements, styles, geographic locations, artists and authors.
- Arrangement:** The sound recordings of lectures are arranged by semester and course name and can be cross referenced with the lecture notebooks and some of the notecards.

Box 2, Folder 6-9	Course Descriptions, 1968-2000
Box 2, Folder 10	Evaluations, Exams, Course Descriptions, 1980-1985
Box 2, Folder 11	Lecture Notes, 1981-1994
Box 2, Folder 12	Lecture Notes and Transcripts, 1970-1991
Box 7, Folder 1	Lectures, First Course at New School and unidentified lectures, circa 1969 19 Sound cassettes
Box 7, Folder 2	Lectures, Rise of Social Consciousness, Spring 1972 31 Sound cassettes
Box 7, Folder 3	Lectures, Art, Self, Society, Spring 1973 12 Sound cassettes
Box 7, Folder 4	Lectures, Radical and Conservative, Spring 1974 14 Sound cassettes
Box 8, Folder 1	Lectures, Radical and Conservative, Spring 1974

6 Sound cassettes

Box 8, Folder 2	Lectures, Games Artists Play, Fall 1975 11 Sound cassettes
Box 8, Folder 3	Lectures, Patterns of Transformation in 20th Century Arts ad Literature, Fall 1976 20 Sound cassettes
Box 8, Folder 4	Lectures, American Modernism from Beginning to End, Spring 1977 18 Sound cassettes
Box 8, Folder 5	Lectures, On the Interpretation of Art and Literature, Spring 1978 11 Sound cassettes
Box 9, Folder 1	Lectures, On the Interpretation of Art and Literature, Spring 1978 19 Sound cassettes
Box 9, Folder 2	Lectures, Roots of Change, Spring 1979 19 Sound cassettes
Box 9, Folder 3	Lectures, Crucibles, Fall 1980 19 Sound cassettes
Box 9, Folder 4	Lectures, Art and Culture in the Second Half of the 20th Century, Spring 1981 21 Sound cassettes
Box 10, Folder 1	Lectures, Reality, Representation and Abstraction in the Arts, Spring 1982 21 Sound cassettes
Box 10, Folder 2	Lectures, Great Dialogs in Art: East and West, Spring 1983 18 Sound cassettes
Box 10, Folder 3	Lectures, Art and the Human Enterprise, Fall 1985 12 Sound cassettes
Box 10, Folder 4	Lectures, Extraordinary Vision: The Eye of the Artist, Spring 1986 12 Sound cassettes
Box 10, Folder 5	Lectures, Art as Transformation, Spring 1987 4 Sound cassettes
Box 11, Folder 1	Lectures, Art as Transformation, Spring 1987 9 Sound cassettes
Box 11, Folder 2	Lectures, The Necessity of Art, Fall 1993 12 Sound cassettes
Box 11, Folder 3	Lectures, Art and the Social Unconscious, Spring 1994

12 Sound cassettes

Box 11, Folder 4	Lectures, The Image in Art, Spring 1995 12 Sound cassettes
Box 11, Folder 5	Lectures, Art in Depth, Fall 1997 13 Sound cassettes
Box 11, Folder 6	Lectures, Art and Its Critical Context, Spring 1998 13 Sound cassettes
Box 12, Folder 1	Lectures, Art and Its Critical Context, Spring 1998 6 Sound cassettes
Box 2, Folder 13-15	Lecture Transcripts, 1975-1981, circa 1994
Box 2, Folder 16	Lecture Transcripts, Tom Wolfe, undated
Box 2, Folder 17-18	Notebooks, undated
Box 3, Folder 1-18	Notebooks, circa 1967-1998, undated
Box 4, Folder 1-16	Notebooks: Elaine Roberta (Bobbie) Werblud, 1972-1979, undated
Box 5, Folder 1-16	Notebooks: Elaine Roberta (Bobbie) Werblud, 1980-1994
Box 13, Folder 1-4	Notecards, American Paintings, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 14, Folder 1	Notecards, American Paintings, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 14, Folder 2	Notecards, American Paintings and American Painting Before the 20th Century, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 14, Folder 3	Notecards, American Paintings and American Painting Before the 20th Century and American Sculpture, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 14, Folder 4	Notecards, American Sculpture, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 15, Folder 1	Notecards, American Sculpture, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 15, Folder 2	Notecards, American Sculpture and American Painting Pre 20th Century and Architecture, Photography, Conceptual Art, and Structuralism, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 15, Folder 3	Notecards, Architecture, Photography, Conceptual Art, and Structuralism, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 15, Folder 4	Notecards, Authors, circa 1968-circa 1999

Box 16, Folder 1-2	Notecards, Authors, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 16, Folder 3	Notecards, Authors and Collections, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 16, Folder 4	Notecards, Collections, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 17, Folder 1	Notecards, Collections and European Painting, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 17, Folder 2-3	Notecards, Contemporary European Painting, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 17, Folder 4	Notecards, Contemporary European Painting and Countries, Music, and Literature, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 18, Folder 1	Notecards, English, German, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 18, Folder 2	Notecards, English, German and European and Nonwestern Sculpture, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 18, Folder 3	Notecards, European and Nonwestern Sculpture and Historic Periods, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 18, Folder 4	Notecards, Historic Periods, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 19, Folder 1	Notecards, Historic Periods and Movements, Styles, and Periods, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 22	Notecards, Lectures, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 23	Notecards, Lectures, circa 1968-circa 1969
Box 24	Notecards, Lectures, circa 1968-circa 1969
Box 19, Folder 2	Notecards, Movements, Styles, and Periods and Premodern European Painting and Sculpture, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 19, Folder 3	Notecards, Premodern European Painting and Sculpture and Pre 20th Century European Painting and Early Modern European, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 19, Folder 4	Notecards, Early Modern European and Primitive, Ethnic, and Asiatic, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 20, Folder 1	Notecards, Primitive, Ethnic, and Asiatic, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 20, Folder 2-4	Notecards, Various Artists and Subjects, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 21, Folder 1-2	Notecards, Various Artists and Subjects, circa 1968-circa 1999

Box 25	Notecards, Various Artists and Subjects and Photographs, circa 1968-circa 1999
Box 6, Folder 1	Notes and Correspondence, 1999
Box 6, Folder 2	NYU Liberal Arts Extension, 1959-1977
Box 6, Folder 3	Photographs of John McDonald Moore, circa 1970s - circa 1980s
Box 6, Folder 4	Printed Material, circa 1970s - circa 1980s
Box 6, Folder 5-6	Study Abroad Courses, circa 1970s - circa 1980s

[Return to Table of Contents](#)