



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the National Society of
Mural Painters Records, 1895 - circa
2007, in the Archives of American Art

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	3
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Arrangement.....	3
Names and Subjects	3
Container Listing	5
Series 1: Administrative Files, 1895-circa 2007.....	5
Series 2: Membership Files, 1915-2001.....	6
Series 3: Correspondence, 1912-2001.....	7
Series 4: Committee Files, 1909-1960s.....	11
Series 5: Exhibition and Competition Files, 1917-1998.....	13
Series 6: Artist Files, 1915-1990s.....	15
Series 7: Financial and Legal Records, 1895-1996.....	17
Series 8: Printed Material, 1915-2000.....	18
Series 9: Scrapbook, 1923-1935.....	19
Series 10: Photographic Material, circa 1900-1997.....	20

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	National Society of Mural Painters records
Identifier:	AAA.natimurp
Date:	1895 - circa 2007
Extent:	13.1 Linear feet
Creator:	National Society of Mural Painters (New York, N.Y.)
Language:	English Collection is in English.
Summary:	The records of the National Society of Mural Painters measure 13.1 linear feet and date from 1895 to circa 2007. The activities of the society are documented through administrative files, membership files, correspondence, committee files, exhibition and competition files, artist files, financial and legal records, printed material, a scrapbook, and photographic materials.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The National Society of Mural Painters lent materials for microfilming in 1963 and donated records in 1965-1966. The National Society of Mural Painters, via President Jeff Greene, gave papers in 2009.

Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds material lent for microfilming (reel NSM1) including 83 photographs of mural paintings and mural studies, and 25 exhibition boards showing sculptures, mosaics, and mural paintings with the artist's name, medium, title, and location listed. Lent materials were returned to the lender and are not described in the collection container inventory.

Other Finding Aids

Microfilm reels D248-D250A: Microfilm inventory available at Archives of American Art offices.

Available Formats

Portions of the collection and material lent for microfilming are available on 35mm microfilm reels D248-D250A and NSM1 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

Processing Information

Portions of the collection were microfilmed on reels D248-D250A shortly after donation. Multiple accessions were merged and archivally processed and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2015 with funding provided by the Smithsonian Institution's Collections Care and Preservation Fund. The Archives of American Art has implemented accelerated processing when possible to increase information about and access to more of our collections. For this collection, accelerated processing included arrangement to the series, subseries and folder levels, adhering to the creator's original arrangement as much as possible. Generally, folder contents were simply verified with the original folder titles, but items within folders were not arranged further. All materials were rehoused in archival folders and boxes for long-term stability, but staples and other fasteners have not all been removed.

Preferred Citation

National Society of Mural Painters records, 1895 - circa 2007. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment. Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate access copy requires advance notice.

Conditions Governing Use

The National Society of Mural Painters records 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

Originally named The Mural Painters, the National Society of Mural Painters (NSMP) was founded in 1895 in New York City by a group of artists, including John W. Alexander, Kenyon Cox, Edwin Blashfield, and John LaFarge, who were concerned with the design and execution of mural art for architecture in the United States. The organization's first president was Frederic Crowninshield. For well over one hundred years members of NSMP have created significant and monumental works of art across the country. Many significant American artists have been members and served as past presidents, such as George Biddle, Hildreth Meière, Arthur S. Covey, Allyn Cox, Helen Treadwell, and Xavier Gonzales, among many others.

Since its founding, the NSMP has collaborated with the Fine Arts Section of the Treasury Department, the federal WPA Arts Project, and the design boards of several World's Fairs. As a member of Artists for Victory, NSMP coordinated the execution of murals for barracks and camps, as well as many triptych alterpieces.

NSMP organizes exhibitions and conducts competitions. In celebration of its one hundredth anniversary, a centennial exhibition was held in October 1995 at the Art Students League. Society members work with other organizations, actively sponsoring legislation for the development and commission of public works of art. Still active today, the current president is Jeff Greene.

Scope and Contents

The records of the National Society of Mural Painters measure 13.1 linear feet and date from 1895 to circa 2007. The activities of the society are documented through administrative files, membership files, correspondence, committee files, exhibition and competition files, artist files, financial and legal records, printed material, a scrapbook, and photographic materials.

Administrative files include meeting minutes and agendas, historical information, and newsletter drafts, and the organization's constitution and by-laws. Membership files contain correspondence with members about their applications and acceptance or denial of membership, member voting ballots, and lists of members. General correspondence is with artists, members, organizations, universities, and federal commissions, and documents a wide variety of NSMP activities; additional correspondence is scattered throughout other series. Correspondence is with Charles Baskerville, Arthur Covey, Allyn Cox, Dean Fausett, Ruth Fortel, Edward Lanning, Everett Molinari, Jack Stewart, and Helen Tredwell, as well as with the American Federation of Arts, the Commission of Fine Arts on War Memorials, Fine Arts Federation, and the U. S. Capitol Historical Society.

Committee files document the work of various NSMP standing and ad hoc committees. Exhibition and competition files include correspondence, photographs, catalogs, itineraries, and printed materials for the NSMP's 1976 U.S. Bicentennial celebration projects, including the "Freedom Murals," "Caravan of Freedom," and "Momentous Events in American History." Additional files document the Red Cross Canteen Project, Federal Art Project, the Municipal Art Society exhibition in 1940, New York City subway murals, and other competitions and public art mural projects.

Artist files primarily date from the 1960s through the 1990s and often include biographies, resumes, correspondence, and photographs of works of art. Financial and legal records include the NSMP treasurer's files, ledgers, and miscellany. Also found in the records are printed materials; a mixed media scrapbook dating from 1923-1935; photographs of meetings, events, exhibitions, and works of art; photo collages of members with examples of their works of art. There are also lantern slides of Francis D. Millet in his studio and with his murals, and of J. Scott Williams with his art work.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 10 series reflecting the original order of the records.

- Series 1: Administrative Files, 1895-circa 2007 (2.2 linear feet; Boxes 1-3)
- Series 2: Membership Files, 1915-2001 (1.1 linear feet; Boxes 3-4)
- Series 3: Correspondence, 1912-2001 (1.0 linear feet; Boxes 4-5)
- Series 4: Committee Files, 1909-1960s (0.3 linear feet; Box 5)
- Series 5: Exhibition and Competition Files, 1917-1998 (2.0 linear feet; Boxes 5-7)
- Series 6: Artist Files, 1915-1990s (1.3 linear feet; Boxes 7-8, 18)
- Series 7: Financial and Legal Records, 1895-1996 (1.5 linear feet; Boxes 8-10)
- Series 8: Printed Material, 1915-2000 (0.9 linear feet; Boxes 10-11)
- Series 9: Scrapbook, 1923-1935 (0.2 linear feet; Box 11)
- Series 10: Photographic Material, circa 1900-1997 (2.5 linear feet; Boxes 12-18)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

American Revolution Bicentennial, 1776-1976
Art -- Study and teaching
Artists' studios -- Photographs
Mural painting and decoration -- 19th century -- United States
Mural painting and decoration -- 20th century -- United States
Subways -- New York (N.Y.)

Types of Materials:

Lantern slides
Photographs
Scrapbooks

Names:

American Federation of Arts
Baskerville, Charles, 1896-
Covey, Arthur Sinclair, 1877-1960
Cox, Allyn, 1896-1982
Fausett, Dean, 1913-
Federal Art Project
Fine Arts Federation of New York
Fortel, Ruth
Lanning, Edward P.
Millet, Francis Davis, 1846-1912
Molinari, Everett
Municipal Art Society of New York
Red Cross
Stewart, Jack, 1926-2005
Treadwell, Helen, 1902-
United States Capitol Historical Society
Williams, J. Scott (John Scott), b. 1877

Occupations:

Muralists -- United States

Container Listing

Series 1: Administrative Files, 1895-circa 2007

2.2 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3)

Administrative files contain material regarding the society's activities, founding, and history and include meeting minutes and agendas, drafts of newsletters, constitution and by-laws, and other miscellaneous documents and one videocassette. Files labeled miscellaneous likely contain duplicates of other material documented throughout the collection.

Box 1, Folder 1-2	Annual Dinner and Meeting, 1910-1943
Box 1, Folder 3	Chapters, Regional, 1940-1941
Box 1, Folder 4-7	Constitution and By-Laws, 1915-1998
Box 1, Folder 8	Guest Register, 1939
Box 1, Folder 9	Historical Information, circa 1950-circa 2000
Box 1, Folder 10	Historical Information, NSMP #1, 1996-1997 <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i>
Box 1, Folder 11	Letterhead Design, 1940, 2000
Box 1, Folder 12	Mailing Lists, circa 1960
Box 1, Folder 13-23	Meeting Minutes and Agendas, 1895-1940
Box 2, Folder 1-19	Meeting Minutes and Agendas, 1940-circa 2007
Box 2, Folder 20-23	Miscellaneous Administrative Files, Likely Duplicates, 1919-circa 1950
Box 3, Folder 1	Miscellaneous Administrative Files, Likely Duplicates, 1919-circa 1950
Box 3, Folder 2	Newsletters, Drafts, circa 1940s
Box 3, Folder 3	Website Design and Permissions, circa 1996

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Membership Files, 1915-2001

1.1 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4)

Found is correspondence relating to the application, acceptance, and decline of membership from 1916 to 1954 and the 1990s. Also found are lists of contact information for members and voting history and ballots. Correspondence about membership applications and acceptance decisions are found for many artists, including George Biddle, Edward Bruce, Kenyon Cox, Allyn Cox, Philip Evergood, William Gropper, Stefan Hirsch, Tom LaFarge, Geoffrey Norman, Violet Oakley, and Ernest Peixotto, among many others.

Box 3, Folder 4	Applications, 1980s
Box 3, Folder 5-18	Contact Information and Lists, 1915-2001
Box 3, Folder 19-21	Contact Information and Lists, Honorary, Lifetime, and Professional Members, 1935-2000
Box 3, Folder 22-32	Correspondence, 1916-1954
Box 4, Folder 1-2	Correspondence, 1990s
Box 4, Folder 3-5	Deceased Members, 1919-circa 2000
Box 4, Folder 6-7	Membership Cards, 1990s-2000
Box 4, Folder 8	Personnel Index, 1917
Box 4, Folder 9-10	Voting Ballots, 1941, 1996

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Correspondence, 1912-2001

1 Linear foot (Boxes 4-5)

Correspondence documents a wide variety of general activities of the NSMP and is with artists, members, organizations, universities, and federal commissions' additional correspondence is scattered throughout other series. Correspondence is with Charles Baskerville, Arthur Covey, Allyn Cox, Dean Fausett, Ruth Fortel, Edward Lanning, Everett Molinari, Jack Stewart, and Helen Tredwell, as well as with the American Federation of Arts, the Commijssion of Fine Arts on War Memorials, Fine Arts Federation, and the U. S. Capitol Historical Society.

Correspondence is arranged in rough alphabetical order. Folders with individual names were transcribed from the original folders may include letters to and from that correspondent.

Box 4, Folder 11	A, 1918-circa 2000
Box 4, Folder 12	American Federation of Art, 1921
Box 4, Folder 13	Andors, Rhoda, 1989-1993
Box 4, Folder 14	Artists League of America, 1946
Box 4, Folder 15	B, circa 1912-circa 1952
Box 4, Folder 16	Baehr, Francine, 1939-1940
Box 4, Folder 17	Baskerville, Charles, 1957-1960
Box 4, Folder 18	C, circa 1912-1976
Box 4, Folder 19	Case, Elizabeth, 1995
Box 4, Folder 20	Columbia University, 1918-1921
Box 4, Folder 21	Commission of Fine Arts on War Memorials, 1946
Box 4, Folder 22	Covey, Arthur, 1939-1940
Box 4, Folder 23	Cox, Allyn, 1960-1963
Box 4, Folder 24	D, circa 1912-circa 1952
Box 4, Folder 25	E, circa 1912-1977
Box 4, Folder 26	F, circa 1912-1978

Box 4, Folder 27-29	Fausett, Dean, 1960s-1980s
Box 4, Folder 30-31	Fine Arts Federation, 1917-1941
Box 4, Folder 32	Fortel, Ruth, 2000
Box 4, Folder 33	Franklin Mint, 1974
Box 4, Folder 34	G, circa 1912-1999
Box 4, Folder 35	Gonzalez, Xavier, 1968
Box 4, Folder 36	H, circa 1912-1986
Box 4, Folder 37	Harding, Robert Jr., 2000s
Box 4, Folder 38-39	Irwin, Howard Lee, 1940-1941
Box 4, Folder 40	J, 1977-1986
Box 4, Folder 41	Juta, Jan, 1975-1976
Box 4, Folder 42	K, circa 1912-circa 1952
Box 4, Folder 43	L, circa 1912-1969
Box 4, Folder 44	Lanning, Edward, 1970s
Box 4, Folder 45	M, circa 1912-1977
Box 4, Folder 46	Mahoney, James Owen, 1938
Box 4, Folder 47	Molinari, Everett, 1980-1999
Box 4, Folder 48	Mortellito, Domenico, 1938-1939
Box 4, Folder 49	N, circa 1912-1977
Box 4, Folder 50	NanTandy, 1980s
Box 4, Folder 51	Norman, Geoffrey, 1939-1940
Box 4, Folder 52	Orme, Lydia Gardner, 1941-1942

Box 4, Folder 53	P, circa 1912-1979
Box 4, Folder 54	Ross, Louis, 1938-1940
Box 4, Folder 55	S, circa 1912-1976
Box 4, Folder 56	Selection of Fine Arts, 1939-1940
Box 4, Folder 57	Slobodkin, Louis, 1939-1940
Box 4, Folder 58-60	Stewart, Jack, 1997-2001
Box 5, Folder 1	T, circa 1912-1981
Box 5, Folder 2	Tobey, Alton, 1977-1993
Box 5, Folder 3	Treadwell, Helen, 1960s-1980s
Box 5, Folder 4	U, circa 1912-1999
Box 5, Folder 5	U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 1983
Box 5, Folder 6	V, circa 1912-circa 1952
Box 5, Folder 7	Victory Hall Association, 1920
Box 5, Folder 8	W, circa 1912-circa 1952
Box 5, Folder 9	Williams, J. Scott, 1937-1938
Box 5, Folder 10	Y, circa 1912-1986
Box 5, Folder 11	Z, circa 1912-circa 1960
Box 5, Folder 12-13	Conferences, 1939-1941
Box 5, Folder 14	Dinner for Ernest Peixotto, 1939-1940
Box 5, Folder 15	Form Letters, 1940-1960
Box 5, Folder 16	Requests for Brochures, 1917-1921

Box 5, Folder 17 Requests for Protest, 1940-1941

Box 5, Folder 18 List of Letters Received, 1939

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Committee Files, 1909-1960s

0.3 Linear feet (Box 5)

Committee files contain scattered correspondence, reports, lists, printed material, and memoranda documenting the work of standing and special committees.

Box 5, Folder 19-20	Amend By-Laws and Constitution, 1921-1936
Box 5, Folder 21	Beautify New York City, 1960s
Box 5, Folder 22	Buildings and Sites, 1943
Box 5, Folder 23	Coordination, 1938-1940
Box 5, Folder 24	Current Work, 1917-1920
Box 5, Folder 25	Dinners, 1921
Box 5, Folder 26-28	Education, 1917-1940
Box 5, Folder 29	Executive Committee, 1917-1921
Box 5, Folder 30	Fine Arts Federation, 1939-1940
Box 5, Folder 31-33	Government and Art, 1940-1954
Box 5, Folder 34	Large Canvases, 1920-1921
Box 5, Folder 35-36	Legislation, 1938-1939
Box 5, Folder 37	Medals and Awards, 1919-1921
Box 5, Folder 38-39	Membership, 1917-1941
Box 5, Folder 40	Mural Painting, 1909
Box 5, Folder 41	Nominating Committee, 1917
Box 5, Folder 42-43	Professional Practice, 1917-1952
Box 5, Folder 44	Proposed Art Building, 1921
Box 5, Folder 45	Publicity , 1921-1940

Box 5, Folder 46-48 Washington Relations , 1939-1940

Box 5, Folder 49 List of Standing Committees, 1919-1941

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Exhibition and Competition Files, 1917-1998

2 Linear feet (Boxes 5-7)

The bulk of this series consists of material relating to the three NSMP projects celebrating the 1976 U.S. Bicentennial, including the "Freedom Murals", "The Caravan of Freedom", and "Momentous Events in American History". Files include correspondence, printed material, plans, itineraries, scattered financial documents, applications, and some photographs documenting planning, execution of work by members, fundraising, and publicity. Included is an audio cassette recording entitled "Momentous Events at Nabisco." A file for the Mural Night Forum includes a letter and typed remarks given by Elizabeth McCausland. There is a videocassette recording of a dedication of a mural by David Garrison in Fort Madison, Iowa.

This series is arranged in chronological order according to the earliest document found for a project. Folders containing material relating to the Bicentennial competitions likely include documents relating to all three projects.

Box 5, Folder 50	Red Cross Canteen Project, 1917-1919
Box 5, Folder 51	George W. Breech Memorial Exhibition, 1920
Box 5, Folder 52	Portland, Oregon Exhibition, 1921-1925
Box 5, Folder 53	Architectural League, 1921-1922
Box 5, Folder 54	Church Competition, 1937-1938
Box 5, Folder 55	Bronx High School of Science, 1939-1940
Box 5, Folder 56	Department Store Competition, 1939
Box 5, Folder 57	Federal Art Project, 1939-1940
Box 5, Folder 58	Municipal Art Society Exhibition, 1939-1940
Box 5, Folder 59	Mural Night Forum, 1939-1940
Box 5, Folder 60	Public Works of Art Competition, 1939-1940
Box 5, Folder 61	Selection of Fine Arts, Recommendations, 1939-1941
Box 5, Folder 62	Subway Murals, New York City, 1939-1940
Box 5, Folder 63-65	World's Fair Competition, 1939-1941
Box 5, Folder 66-67	Whitney Museum Exhibition, 1940-1941

Box 6, Folder 1-3	Whitney Museum Exhibition, 1940-1941
Box 6, Folder 4-5	Ernest Peixotto Memorial, 1942-1950
Box 6, Folder 6	Architectural League Exhibition , 1947
Box 6, Folder 7	Metropolitan Museum Exhibition, 1958
Box 6, Folder 8	New York State Thruway Authority Competition, 1973-1978
Box 6, Folder 9-36	Bicentennial Competitions, 1973-1982
Box 7, Folder 1-17	Bicentennial Competitions, 1976-1998
Box 7, Folder 18	Bicentennial Competitions, Momentous Events at Nabisco, circa 1980 <i>1 Sound cassette</i>
Box 7, Folder 19	100th Anniversary Exhibition, 1995
Box 7, Folder 20	Dedication of Mural by David Garrison, Fort Madison, Iowa, 1997 <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i>
Box 7, Folder 21	Mexico International Exhibition, 1997
Box 7, Folder 22-23	Art Students League Exhibition, 1998

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Artist Files, 1915-1990s

1.3 Linear feet (Boxes 7-8, 18)

Artist files may include resumes, correspondence, photographs of works of art. The bulk of the material dates from the 1960s to the 1990s. Earlier material consists of general artist biographies. Files are found for Robert P. Archer, Tom Capuccio, Peggy Delport, Dean Fausett, Michael Glickman, Robert J. Harding, Frank Mason, James Penny, and Elias River, among others.

Box 7, Folder 24	General Artist Biographies, 1915-1944
Box 7, Folder 25	General Slide Lists, circa 1920
Box 7, Folder 26	A, 1960s-1990s
Box 7, Folder 27-28	B, 1960s-1990s
Box 7, Folder 29	C, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 1	C, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 2	D, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 3	E, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 4	F, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 5	G, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 6	H, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 7	J, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 8	K, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 9	L, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 10-11	M, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 12	N, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 13	O, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 14	P, 1960s-1990s

Box 8, Folder 15	R, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 16	S, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 17-18	T, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 19	V, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 20-21	W, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 22	Y, 1960s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 23	Z, 1960s-1990s
Box 18, Folder 2	Oversized Photos of Works of Art, circa 1960-circa 1980

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 7: Financial and Legal Records, 1895-1996

1.5 Linear feet (Boxes 8-10)

This series consists primarily of the treasurers' files containing correspondence regarding the payment of dues and financial reports. Other materials found here include ledgers and cash books, the majority of which are organized by member and note the payment date of dues received. Banking records consist of permission forms noting which officers are allowed access to the society's bank accounts. Legal records include a draft of an agreement and records relating to changing the name of the society in 1937.

Box 8, Folder 24-25	Treasurer Files, 1895-1917
Box 9, Folder 1-11	Treasurer Files, 1917-1996
Box 9, Folder 12-20	Ledgers, Cash Books, 1895-1950s
Box 10, Folder 1-2	Banking Material, Permissions, 1934-1952
Box 10, Folder 3-5	Tax Preparation and Exemption Records, 1944-1980
Box 10, Folder 6	Agreement, Draft, circa 1920
Box 10, Folder 7	Name Change Records, 1937
Box 10, Folder 8	Entrance Fee Receipts, 1940
Box 10, Folder 9-17	Receipts, Bills, and Invoices, 1938-1966

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 8: Printed Material, 1915-2000

0.9 Linear feet (Boxes 10-11)

Exhibition catalogs and announcements, informational brochures and pamphlets, newsletters, and a portfolio of members' works were published by National Society of Mural Painters. Clippings concern the society's members and its activities.

Box 10, Folder 18-19	Admission Tickets and Printing Plate, 1923
Box 10, Folder 20-23	Clippings, 1934-1990
Box 10, Folder 24-27	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, 1915-1998
Box 10, Folder 28-34	Informational Brochures and Pamphlets, 1915-2000
Box 10, Folder 35-41	Newsletters, 1936-2000
Box 10, Folder 42	Portfolio, 1950-1952
Box 11, Folder 1-3	Portfolio, 1950-1952
Box 11, Folder 4	Reproductions of Works of Art, circa 1970

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 9: Scrapbook, 1923-1935

0.2 Linear feet (Box 11)

One mixed media scrapbook contains correspondence, clippings, invitations, exhibition announcements, and some reproductions of works of art.

Box 11, Folder 5

Scrapbook 1, 1923-1935

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 10: Photographic Material, circa 1900-1997

2.5 Linear feet (Boxes 12-18)

Photographic materials consists of scattered photographs, transparencies, lantern slides, and photo collages of members, artwork, members with their artwork, meetings, exhibitions, and events. The photo collages typically include a photo of the artist and examples of their work. Also found are lantern slides, mostly of works of art, and of Francis D. Millet in his studio and with his murals and of J. Scott Williams with his art. A list of the lantern slides is found within the records, but it is unclear whether the list corresponds to all or some of the lantern slides.

Box 12, Folder 1-8	Exhibitions and Events, 1970s-1997
Box 12, Folder 9	Meetings, 1990s
Box 12, Folder 10-11	Works of Art, 1970s-1990s
Box 12, Folder 12	Transparencies, circa 1960
Box 12, Folder 13	List of Lantern Slides, circa 1935
Box 13, Folder 1-6	Lantern Slides, circa 1900-circa 1950
Box 14, Folder 1-6	Lantern Slides, circa 1900-circa 1950
Box 15, Folder 1-6	Lantern Slides, circa 1900-circa 1950
Box 16, Folder 1-6	Lantern Slides, circa 1900-circa 1950
Box 17, Folder 1-4	Lantern Slides, circa 1900-circa 1950
Box 18, Folder 1	Oversized Photo Collages, circa 1995

[Return to Table of Contents](#)