



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Alice Neel Papers, 1933-1983, in the Archives of American Art

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July 18, 2011

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Alice Neel papers
<b>Date:</b>	1933-1983
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.neelalic
<b>Creator:</b>	Neel, Alice, 1900-1984
<b>Extent:</b>	1 Linear foot
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of New York painter Alice Neel measure 1.0 linear foot and date from 1933 to 1983. The bulk of the collection documents the last fifteen years of Neel's career as an artist. Found within the papers are letters from galleries, museums, and art organizations; writings and notes by Neel; exhibition catalogs, clippings, and other printed material; and photographs depicting Neel, exhibitions, and her artwork.

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The collection was donated from 1974 to 1983 by Alice Neel.

### Related Material

Also found in the Archives of American Art are printed material on Romare Bearden, Alice Neel, and Howard Newman, 1975-1990, compiled by Dennis Florio, and a videorecording of "Art and Alice Neel," 1975, recorded as part of University of Georgia Television station WGTV's "Forum" program.

### Alternative Forms Available

The collection is available on 35 mm microfilm reel 4964 at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed by Jean Fitzgerald in 1990. Funding for the processing, microfilming, and cataloging was provided by the Bay Foundation. A finding aid was written in 2011 by Erin Kinhart.

### Preferred Citation

Alice Neel papers, 1933-1983. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

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## Biographical Note

Alice Neel (1900-1984) was a painter in New York, NY. She was known for her portraits of New York artists and intellectuals. Neel studied painting at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women (now the Moore College of Art and Design) from 1921-1925. She married Cuban artist Carlos Enríquez, and they briefly lived in Havana, Cuba. After the break-up of their marriage, she settled in New York City. During the 1930s she worked for the Public Works of Art Project and the Works Progress Administration, painting scenes of urban poverty and developing her distinctive portrait style. She pursued a career as a figurative painter during a period when abstraction was favored, and she did not begin to gain critical praise for her work until the 1960s. Neel received an honorary doctorate from the Moore College of Art and Design in 1971 and a retrospective of her work was held at the Whitney Museum in 1974. During the last decade of her life she finally received extensive national recognition for her paintings. Neel was also a notable public speaker and often spoke on the topic of women artists.

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## Scope and Content Note

The papers of New York painter Alice Neel measure 1.0 linear foot and date from 1933 to 1983. The bulk of the collection documents the last fifteen years of Neel's career as an artist. Found within the papers are letters from galleries, museums, and art organizations; writings and notes by Neel; exhibition catalogs, clippings, and other printed material; and photographs depicting Neel, exhibitions, and her artwork.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as # series:

- Series 1: Letters, circa 1968-1983 (Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)
  - Series 2: Writings and Notes, circa 1960-1979 (Box 1; 2 folders)
  - Series 3: Printed Material, 1933-1983 (Box 1; 0.6 linear feet)
  - Series 4: Photographs, 1940-1983 (Box 1; 6 folders)
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## 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  
Portrait painters -- New York (State) -- New York  
Portrait painting -- 20th century -- United States  
Women artists

Women painters

Types of Materials:

Notes

Photographs

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Letters, circa 1968-1983

*(Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)*

Scope and Contents: Letters are from galleries, museums, and art organizations and primarily concern Neel's work and art related activities. Also found are holiday and birthday cards from friends as well as fan mail. Included among the letters from 1977 are two color snapshots of Neel.

Arrangement: Letters are arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 1	<a href="#">Letters, 1968-1973</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	<a href="#">Letters, 1974-1975</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	<a href="#">Letters, 1976</a>
Box 1, Folder 4-6	Letters, 1977 January-September
Box 1, Folder 7	<a href="#">Letters, 1977 October-December</a>
Box 1, Folder 8-9	Letters, 1978 January-October
Box 1, Folder 10	<a href="#">Letters, 1978 November-December</a>
Box 1, Folder 11-14	Letters, 1979
Box 1, Folder 15	Letters, 1980 January
Box 1, Folder 16	<a href="#">Letters, 1980 February</a>
Box 1, Folder 17	Letters, 1980 March-September
Box 1, Folder 18	<a href="#">Letters, 1980 October-December</a>
Box 1, Folder 19	<a href="#">Letters, 1981-1983</a>
Box 1, Folder 20	<a href="#">Letters, undated</a>

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## Series 2: Writings and Notes, circa 1960-1979

*(Box 1; 2 folders)*

Scope and Contents: This series includes artists' statements, Neel's acceptance speech for her degree, her Bloomsburg State College lecture, a one page reminiscence on Anton Refregier, and miscellaneous notes.

Box 1, Folder 21	<a href="#">Writings, 1960-1979</a>
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Box 1, Folder 22	<a href="#">Notes, undated</a>
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## Series 3: Printed Material, 1933-1983

(Box 1; 0.6 linear feet)

Scope and Contents: Printed material primarily document's Neels late career from 1970 to 1983. Included are announcements and exhibiton catalogs for solo and group shows, newspaper and magazine articles about Neel, and scattered press releases, flyers, and event brochures. Also found is a journal, *Mother Number Six*, which includes reproductions of Neel's portraits of Joe Gould.

Box 1, Folder 23	Press Releases, undated
Box 1, Folder 24	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1933-1967
Box 1, Folder 25	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1970-1983 (10 folders)
Box 1, Folder 35	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, undated
Box 1, Folder 36	<a href="#">Programs, 1971-1981</a>
Box 1, Folder 37	Advertisements Brochures, 1978-1983
Box 1, Folder 38	Clippings, undated, 1968-1983 (4 folders)
Box 1, Folder 43	Journal, Mother Number Six, 1965
Box 1, Folder 42	<a href="#">Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1973, 1977-1981, Undated</a>

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## Series 4: Photographs, 1940-1983

*(Box 1; 6 folders)*

Scope and Contents: Found in this series are eight photograph portraits of Alice Neel, including one of her in her studio in 1983, and photographs of exhibition openings at the Maxwell Gallery and the Graham Gallery. Photographs of these openings include her colleagues John Koch and Raphael Soyer. Photograph stills from the movie "Pull My Daisy" depict Neel and others. Also found are photographs of Neel's artwork and slides of an exhibition installation at Akron Art Institute.

Box 1, Folder 44	<a href="#">Photographs of Neel, 1940-1983</a>
Box 1, Folder 45	Photographs of Studio and Gallery Openings, 1968
Box 1, Folder 46	<a href="#">Stills from Motion Picture Film with Neel, circa 1960</a>
Box 1, Folder 47	Photographs of Works of Art, circa 1981 (2 folders)
Box 1, Folder 49	Slides of Installation at Akron Art Institute, 1979

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