



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Marianne Strengell Papers, 1904-1980s, in the Archives of American Art

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Marianne Strengell papers
Date:	1904-1980s
Identifier:	AAA.stremari
Creator:	Strengell, Marianne, 1909-1998
Extent:	1.5 Linear feet
Language:	The collection is in English and Swedish.
Summary:	The papers of weaver, fiber artist and educator Marianne Strengell date from 1904 to the 1980s and measure 1.5 linear feet. The scattered papers focus on Strengell's career as an artist and include biographical materials, correspondence, writings, six scrapbooks, printed material, photographs, and artwork.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Along with her husband Olav Hammarstrom, Marianne Strengell donated her papers to the Archives of American Art in 1982-1983 and 1989.

Related Materials

Additional papers are held at the Cranbrook Archives, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2019.

Preferred Citation

Marianne Strengell papers, 1904-1980s. 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.

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Biographical / Historical

Finnish-American textile artist Marianne Strengell (1909-1998) was known for the use of synthetic fibers in her work. She was an educator and was at the Cranbrook Academy of Art from 1937 to 1962.

Born in Helsinki, Finland in 1909, Marianne Strengell studied industrial arts at a Helsinki university. She spent her early career designing textiles and rugs throughout Scandinavia but came to the United States in 1936. Strengell was invited to teach at the Cranbrook Academy of Art by Eliel Saarinen, a family friend. She began as a professor but became the head of the Department of Weaving and Textile Design after the retirement of Loja Saarinen. Strengell focused on texture in her weavings and often used synthetic fibers. She took many commissions during her career, including many for automotive companies in Detroit. Also, she exhibited her works at institutions and in print.

Under the United States government in 1951, Strengell travelled to the Philippines to establish weaving as a cottage industry. In the mid-1960s she acted as a consultant on textile production to the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration with her husband, Olav Hammarstrom.

Marianne Strengell married fellow Cranbrook artist Charles Yerkes Dusenbury in 1940. They had two children but divorced in 1949. Later, she married architect Olav Hammarstorm.

Scope and Contents

The papers of weaver, fiber artist and educator Marianne Strengell date from 1904 to the 1980s and measure 1.5 linear feet. The scattered papers focus on Strengell's career as an artist and include biographical materials, correspondence, writings, six scrapbooks, printed material, photographs, and artwork.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Finnish Americans
- Textile crafts
- Weaving
- Women artists
- Women educators
- Women textile designers

Types of Materials:

- Drawings
- Scrapbooks

Names:

- Cranbrook Academy of Art
- Hammarstrom, Olav, 1906-2002

Occupations:

- Educators -- Michigan -- Bloomfield Hills
- Fiber artists -- Michigan -- Bloomfield Hills
- Weavers -- Michigan -- Bloomfield Hills

Container Listing

Series 1: Marianne Strengell Papers, 1904-1980s

1.5 Linear feet (Box 1-3)

Scope and Contents: Biographical sketches are found for Strengell and her architect father, Gustav Strengell.

Correspondence is from artist friends and institutions. Notable correspondents include Harry Bertoia, Charles Dusenbury, Jack Lenor Larsen, Eliel Saarinen, Astrid Sampe, Nelly Homi Sethna, and Harry Weese.

Two unpublished manuscripts by Strengell date are entitled "Rugs, Rugs, Rugs" (original collation) and "Paris" (a xerox copy). Other writings include drafts of press releases concerning Strengell's work abroad and the exhibition of her artwork and a draft of a report of craft development in Jamaica written by Hammarstrom and Strengell.

Five scrapbooks were compiled between circa 1937 and 1966 and may include clippings, photographs, writings, and textile samples spanning Strengell's career. Most of the scrapbooks focus on Strengell's exhibitions and appearances in magazines; scrapbooks 3-5, however, document her trip to the Philippines and Jamaica as a weaving consultant. One scrapbook was compiled by Marianne's mother, Anna Strengell, and contains clippings from Swedish-language Finnish newspapers on her Marianne Strengell's career and also includes writings.

Photographs depict Strengell at her loom, with her artworks at exhibition, and with her students at Cranbrook. Also found are fine art photographs taken by Strengell during the 1960s. Vacation snapshots were taken in 1932 and are likely from a Scandinavian location.

An unsigned sketchbook was likely kept during her honeymoon with Charles Dusenbury in 1940 and contains drawings of scenes throughout the American West and Southwest. Other artworks include monoprints and textile samples.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Sketches and Resumes, 1940s
Box 1, Folder 2	Biographical Sketches, Gustav Strengell, 1904
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1932
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence, 1950-1956
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence, 1961-1969
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence, 1970-1979
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence, 1980-1983
Box 1, Folder 8	Correspondence, circa 1950s-1980s
Box 1, Folder 9-10	Writings, by Strengell, circa 1930s-1960s

Box 1, Folder 11	Press Releases, Drafts, 1940s
Box 1, Folder 12	Report, Craft Development in Jamaica, 1967
Box 1, Folder 13	Scrapbook 1, circa 1937 Notes: Clippings and Writings by Marianne Strengell, in Swedish
Box 1, Folder 14	Scrapbook 2, 1939-1941 Notes: Clippings
Box 1, Folder 15	Scrapbook 3, circa 1950-1951 Notes: Manila, Philippines. Textile and Thread Samples, Writings, Photos
Box 1, Folder 16	Scrapbook 4, 1951-1954 Notes: Manila, Philippines. Clippings and Press Releases
Box 1, Folder 17-18	Scrapbook 5, 1966 Notes: Jamaica. Textile Samples and Photos
Box 1, Folder 19	Scrapbook 6, Compiled by Anna Strengell, 1934-1935 Notes: Clippings and Writings, in Swedish.
Box 1, Folder 20-22	Clippings, 1930s-1980s
Box 1, Folder 23	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1935-1957
Box 3, Folder 3	Oversized Lecture Announcement, circa 1950
Box 1, Folder 24	Photographs, of Strengell, 1930s-1960s
Box 1, Folder 25	Photographs, Vacation Snapshots, 1932
Box 1, Folder 26	Photographs, of Artworks and Exhibitions, 1940s-1970s
Box 1, Folder 27	Photographs, Fine Art taken by Marianne Strengell, 1960s
Box 3, Folder 1	Oversized Photographs, Fine Art taken by Marianne Strengell, 1960s
Box 1, Folder 28	Photographs, Fine Art taken by Marianne Strengell on Ossabau Island, 1964
Box 1, Folder 29	Sketchbook, 1940 Notes: Sketches of various locations around the American West and Southwest including: North Dakota; Finlandia, Montana; Sandunes at Carmel, California; San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Malibu Beach, California; Tijuana, Mexico; Yuma, Taliesin West (Scottsdale), Arizona; Bryce Canyon, Utah.
Box 3, Folder 4	Oversized Monoprints by Marianne Strengell, 1950s

Box 1, Folder 30-31 Textile Samples, circa 1930-1970

Box 2, Folder 1-3 Textile Samples, circa 1930-1970

Box 3, Folder 2 Oversized Textile Samples, circa 1930-1970

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