



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the John Weatherwax  
Papers Relating to Frida Kahlo and Diego  
Rivera, 1928-1988, bulk 1931-1933,  
in the Archives of American Art

Rosa Fernandez and Erin Corley

Funding for the digitization of this collection was  
provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

July 2002, Revised February 2009

Archives of American Art  
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	John Weatherwax papers relating to Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.weatjohn
<b>Date:</b>	1928-1988 (bulk 1931-1933)
<b>Extent:</b>	0.4 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Weatherwax, John M. (John Martin), 1900-1984
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	This small collection of scattered papers of American writer John Weatherwax (1900-1984) dates from 1928 to 1988 (bulk 1931-1933), and measures 0.4 liner feet. The papers document Weatherwax's relationship with Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. In 1931, John Weatherwax approached Rivera to illustrate his English translation of the Mayan story of creation, the <i>Popol Vuh</i> . Rivera agreed and produced twenty-four watercolor illustrations for the text. The papers contain Weatherwax's translation, "Seven Times the Color of Fire", as well as manuscript versions of two short stories he wrote about Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo entitled "The Queen of Montgomery Street" and "Diego". Also found within the collection are correspondence, manuscripts and notes, printed materials, and photographs.

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

Seema Weatherwax donated her husband's papers to the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution in 1988.

### Alternative Forms Available

This site provides access to the papers of **John Weatherwax** relating to Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in the Archives of American Art that were digitized in 2009, and total 805 images.

### Processing Information

Processing was completed and the finding aid written by Rosa M. Fernandez in July, 2002, and updated in 2009 by Erin Corley. The collection was digitized in 2009 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

## Preferred Citation

John Weatherwax papers relating to Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, 1928-1988, bulk 1931-1933. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

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## Biographical Note

American writer John Weatherwax (1900-1984) was born in Aberdeen, Washington, and attended the University of Washington in Seattle for two years before going to Harvard College in 1921. His studies focused on English literature, business, mythology, and world literature. Weatherwax wrote a number of children's stories and, in 1934, co-authored with his sister and brother-in-law Gerald Strang, *The Coming of the Animals*, a series of California Native American stories.

Weatherwax met Mexican muralist Diego Rivera and painter Frida Kahlo in San Francisco when the couple stayed with sculptor Ralph Stackpole in his studio on Montgomery Street. Rivera was there to work on a commission to paint a mural for the San Francisco Stock Exchange. At the time Weatherwax was working on an English translation of the ancient Mayan codex, *Popol Vuh*, and asked Rivera if he would provide illustrations for the manuscript. Although the translation was never published, Rivera agreed and produced twenty-four watercolor illustrations for the text.

Weatherwax revealed his admiration for Diego and Frida by writing a manuscript entitled "The Queen of Montgomery Street", a clever short story about Frida's and Diego's experiences in San Francisco. Probably written as a gift to the Rivera's, the central figures of "The Queen of Montgomery Street" were Diego as King and Frida as Queen. He also wrote a story entitled "Diego".

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## Scope and Content Note

This small collection of scattered papers of American writer John Weatherwax (1900-1984) dates from 1928 to 1988 (bulk 1931-1933), and measures 0.4 linear feet. The papers document Weatherwax's relationship with Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. In 1931, John Weatherwax approached Rivera to illustrate his English translation of the Mayan story of creation, the *Popol Vuh*. Rivera agreed and produced twenty-four watercolor illustrations for the text. The papers contain Weatherwax's translation, "Seven Times the Color of Fire", as well as manuscript versions of stories he wrote about Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, including one entitled "The Queen of Montgomery Street". Also found are several draft manuscripts of stories concerning Diego Rivera, which include "Diego", "Diego, Galka and Toby", the latter about art dealer Galka Scheyer's visit to Diego Rivera's studio in San Francisco containing references to

the *Blue Rider* exhibition she organized in the early 1930s of the work of the artists collective, the "Blue Four" (Der Blaue Vier).

Also found within the collection is scattered correspondence, including letters from painter, printmaker, and muralist Emmy Lou Packard concerning Diego and Frida, two telegrams from American novelist Upton Sinclair to John Weatherwax, and a letter from the Russian filmmaker, Sergei Eisenstein, to Rivera introducing Weatherwax. Additional manuscripts and notes, printed materials, and photographs are also found within the papers.

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## Arrangement

- Series 1: Correspondence, 1928-1988 (Box 1, 5 folders)
- Series 2: Manuscripts and Notes, circa 1930-1971 (Box 1, 14 folders)
- Series 3: Printed Material, 1931-1987 (Box 1, 4 folders)
- Series 4: Photographs, circa 1930s, 1974 (Box 1, 3 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:

Artists -- California -- San Francisco  
Mayas  
Mural painting and decoration, American -- Foreign influences  
Mural painting and decoration, Mexican -- Influence

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Kahlo, Frida  
Packard, Emmy Lou, 1914-1998  
Rivera, Diego, 1886-1957  
Scheyer, Galka E.  
Sinclair, Upton, 1878-1968

Preferred Titles:

*Popol vuh*

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Correspondence, 1928-1988

(Box 1; 5 folders)

This series includes scattered correspondence between Weatherwax and several publishing houses regarding the possible publication of his English translation of the Mayan codex, *Popol Vuh*, as well a copy of the contract between Diego Rivera and Weatherwax for the illustrations. Also found are letters from painter, printmaker, and muralist Emmy Lou Packard concerning Diego and Frida, two telegrams from American novelist Upton Sinclair to John Weatherwax, and a letter from the Russian filmmaker, Sergei Eisenstein, to Rivera introducing Weatherwax. A copy of a letter written by Frida Kahlo to Clara and Gerald Strang, Weatherwax's sister and brother-in-law is also housed in this series.

Box 1, Folder 1	Correspondence regarding the <i>Popol Vuh</i> Manuscript, 1930-1933, 1960 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	Correspondence with Emmy Lou Packard, 1982-1988 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	Miscellaneous Correspondence between Weatherwax and Others, 1928-1932, 1953, 1973-1975 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters to Diego Rivera from Sergei Eisenstein, circa 1930 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 5	Letter from Frida Kahlo to Clara and Gerald Strang, 1931 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>

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## Series 2: Manuscripts and Notes, circa 1930-1971

(Box 1; 14 folders)

Finished or draft copies of short stories by Weatherwax including his unpublished English translation of the ancient Mayan text *Popol Vuh*, entitled "Seven Times the Colour of Fire". Additional manuscripts include "The Archer of Itza" by Weatherwax and "Sun Tiger and Moon Tiger" by Clara Fowler Weatherwax, both of which are translations of Mayan stories. Also found are several draft manuscripts of stories concerning Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, which include "Diego", "Diego, Galka and Toby" about art dealer Galka Scheyer's visit to Diego Rivera's studio in San Francisco containing references to the *Blue Rider* exhibition she organized in the early 1930s of the work of the artists collective, the "Blue Four" (Der Blaue Vier). Several versions of Weatherwax's manuscript "The Queen of Montgomery Street" are also found in this series. Also found are notes regarding several sheets of graph paper Rivera used to square off and draw his murals to scale and a photograph of a handwritten note by Frida Kahlo.

Box 1, Folder 6	<i>The Archer of Itza</i> , circa 1971 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 7	"Diego", circa mid-1900s (multiple versions) <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 8	"Diego, Galka and Toby", circa mid-1900s (multiple versions) <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 9	"The Queen of Montgomery Street", 1930-circa mid 1900s <a href="#">Image(s)</a> (multiple versions)
Box 1, Folder 10	"The Queen of Montgomery Street", 1930-circa mid-1900s (multiple versions) <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 11	"Seven Times the Color of Fire" (Draft One), circa 1931 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 12	"Seven Times the Color of Fire" (Draft One), circa 1931 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 13	"Seven Times the Color of Fire" (Draft One), circa 1931 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 14	"Seven Times the Color of Fire" (Draft Two), circa mid-1900s <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 15	"Seven Times the Color of Fire" (Draft Two), circa mid-1900s

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 16 "Seven Times the Color of Fire" (Draft Two), circa mid-1900s  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 17 "Sun Tiger and Moon Tiger" (Draft One), circa 1930s  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 18 "Sun Tiger and Moon Tiger" (Draft Two), circa mid-1900s  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 19 Notes, circa 1930-1931  
[Image\(s\)](#)

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## Series 3: Printed Material, 1931-1987

*(Box 1; 4 folders)*

Clippings from various Spanish and English language newspapers and magazines regarding Rivera and Kahlo's 1931 visit to San Francisco and other printed matter. Also found are reproductions of Rivera's watercolor illustrations he designed for "Seven Times the Colour of Fire".

Box 1, Folder 20	Exhibition and Event Announcements, 1955-1986 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 21	News Clippings, 1931-1986 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 22	Reproductions of Diego Rivera Watercolors for "Seven Times the Colour of Fire", 1960 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 23	Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1987, circa mid-1900s <a href="#">Image(s)</a>

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## Series 4: Photographs, circa 1930s, 1974

*(Box 1; 3 folders)*

Several sepia tint photographs of Diego Rivera and a Paul Juley photograph of Rivera with his wife Frida Kahlo at the studio of Ralph Stackpole in San Francisco. The photograph includes a handwritten dedication by Rivera to William Gerstle. Two photographs of murals by Diego Rivera, photographs of Rivera's watercolor illustrations he designed for "Seven Times the Colour of Fire", and photo negatives of the Juley photograph complete this series.

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|------------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 24 | Photographs of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, circa 1931<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>   |
| Box 1, Folder 25 | Photographs of Murals, circa 1930s<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a>  |
| Box 1, Folder 26 | Photographs of Diego Rivera Watercolors for "Seven Times the Colour of Fire",<br>circa 1931, 1974<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a> |

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