



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Isabel Lydia Whitney papers

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

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Isabel Lydia Whitney papers
Date:	1832-1973
Identifier:	AAA.whitisab
Creator:	Whitney, Isabel Lydia, 1884-1962
Extent:	37 Items ((on partial microfilm reel))
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Lent for microfilming 1985 by Robert P. Coggins.

Location of Originals

Originals returned to Robert Coggins after microfilming.

Available Formats

35mm microfilm reel 3615 available at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Restrictions

The Archives of American art does not own the original papers. Use is limited to the microfilm copy.

Biographical / Historical

Painter. Known as the first woman fresco painter in America. Studied at Pratt Institute. Using Cennino Cennini's fifteenth century book on fresco painting as a guide, Ms. Whitney devised her own fresco formulas that could better endure the harsh New York climate. Her career as a fresco painter ended, however, after a crippling fall but she was to continue to work in watercolors and oils. Ms. Whitney also decorated homes of the famous, restored old houses, and designed wallpaper (including restoration of the Williamsburg prints). She exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum, Fifteen Gallery, Pen & Brush Club, and others.

Biographical / Historical

Ms. Whitney is a direct descendant of William Penn and Eli Whitney.

Scope and Contents

2 notebooks, one labeled "Paintings/Watercolor/Landscapes" (79 pages) and the other "Decoration/Fresco/Drawings/Misc./Oils" (129 pages) containing titles and descriptions of works completed; lists of works exhibited at the Society of Independent Artists, 1917-1941; 3 exhibition catalogs and announcements, undated, 1963-1964; 2 scrapbooks containing correspondence and articles associated with Ms. Whitney; 1 album of 34 photographs of Ms. Whitney from infancy to young adulthood, of her family and friends, and of her murals; 2 samples of floral fabric designs and 1 sample of wallpaper designed for Katzenbach & Warren, Inc.

Scope and Contents

3 watercolor studies for murals; 1 pen and ink drawing of the trademark for Whitney Work Stop Motion Silk; 18 photographs of Ms. Whitney, her family, and works of art; and 3 letters from Dawn Langley Simmons to Robert Coggins regarding Ms. Whitney's paintings, 1972-1973.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Decorative arts
- Mural painting and decoration -- New York (State) -- Brooklyn
- Textile design -- New York (State) -- Brooklyn
- Women artists

Types of Materials:

- Scrapbooks

Names:

- Simmons, Dawn Langley

Occupations:

- Muralists -- New York (State) -- Brooklyn
- Textile designers -- New York (State) -- Brooklyn