



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Louis Wiesenbergs Papers, 1913-1981, in the Archives of American Art

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## Collection Overview

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Repository:</b> | Archives of American Art  |
| <b>Title:</b>      | Louis Wiesenberg papers   |
| <b>Date:</b>       | 1913-1981   |
| <b>Identifier:</b> | AAA.wiesloui  |
| <b>Creator:</b>    | Wiesenberg, Louis, 1893-1943  |
| <b>Extent:</b>     | 0.6 Linear feet   |
| <b>Language:</b>   | Collection is in English.   |
| <b>Summary:</b>    | The scattered papers of Louis Wiesenberg measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1913-1981. Found are biographical materials, letters primarily from Louis' widow Raizel Wiesenberg, notes and writings, numerous drawings, printed material, and photographs of Wiesenberg, his family, and artwork. |

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The Louis Wiesenberg papers were donated in 1981 and 1982 by Raizel Wiesenberg Arp, the artist's widow.

### Processing Information

The papers were processed in February 2007 by Jean Fitzgerald.

### Preferred Citation

Louis Wiesenberg papers, 1913-1981. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

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## Biographical Note

Louis Wiesenberg (1893-1943) was born in Poland and studied art in Montreal and at the National Academy of Design in New York. He settled in New York where he painted and drew. He later moved back to Montreal, but continued to exhibit in New York.

In 1909, Wiesenberg immigrated to Montreal, Canada, with his father and two sisters, leaving his mother and three other sisters in Poland until money could be sent for their passage. His father, who had studied painting in Paris, established a small paint shop in which Louis learned about paint, brushes, and other artistic tools.

After studying art at the Monument Nationale School in Montreal, Louis Wiesenberg continued his studies at the National Academy of Design in New York City in 1916. Following the death of his eldest sister in 1917, Wiesenberg returned to Montreal to assist in his father's business, but continued to exhibit his artwork in Montreal, Ottawa, and New York.

In 1922 Wiesenberg married Raizel, a singer, and they eventually settled in New York City. They befriended many artists, including Milton Avery and Mark Rothko. In 1928, a series of portrait drawings of authors by Wiesenberg was published in the *Herald Tribune*. He also worked at various art-related jobs including teaching art at a children's camp in order to make ends meet. During the Depression, Wiesenberg's health began to fail.

Louis Wiesenberg died on December 22, 1943 in New York City.

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## Scope and Content Note

The papers of painter Louis Wiesenberg measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1913 to 1981. Found within the papers are biographical material; letters - mostly written by his widow Raizel Wiesenberg attempting to organize a posthumous exhibition; notes and writings, including manuscripts describing Wiesenberg's thoughts on art; numerous drawings of figure studies and landscapes; printed material, including catalogs from exhibitions by obscure organizations such as the Level Club and the Society of Independent Artists; and photographs of Wiesenberg, his family and his artwork.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1916-1981 (Box 1; 1 folder)
- Series 2: Letters, 1917-1981 (Box 1; 7 folders)
- Series 3: Notes and Writings, 1939-1943 (Box 1; 4 folders)
- Series 4: Artwork, 1927-1932 (Box 1; 19 folders)
- Series 5: Printed Material, 1924-1944 (Boxes 1-2; 7 folders)
- Series 6: Photographs, 1913-1973 (Box 2; 5 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

Types of Materials:

Drawings  
Photographs  
Writings

Names:

Level Club Condominium (New York, N.Y.)  
Society of Independent Artists (New York, N.Y.)  
Wiesenberg, Raizel

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1916-1981

*(Box 1; 1 folder)*

Scope and Contents: Biographical material consists of a National Academy of Design student identity card, a New York military census card, and a biographical manuscript written by Wiesenberg's wife, Raizel.

Box 1, Folder 1                  Identity Cards and Biographical Manuscript, 1916-1981, undated

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## Series 2: Letters, 1917-1981

*(Box 1; 7 folders)*

Scope and Contents: Letters discuss art-related business and are primarily from Raizel Wiesenbergs relating to her attempts to organize a posthumous exhibition of her husband's work.

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Box 1, Folder 2   | Letters, undated   |
| Box 1, Folder 3   | Letters, 1917-1918 |
| Box 1, Folder 4   | Letters, 1925-1942 |
| Box 1, Folder 5-6 | Letters, 1944      |
| Box 1, Folder 7   | Letters, 1947-1968 |
| Box 1, Folder 8   | Letters, 1980-1981 |

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## Series 3: Notes and Writings, 1939-1943

*(Box 1; 4 folders)*

Scope and Contents: This series consists of manuscripts by Louis Wiesenber concerning art-related topics, poems by Raizel Wiesenber dedicated to her deceased husband, and miscellaneous notes.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 9  | Drafts of "What is Art?" by Louis Wiesenber, undated             |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | Manuscript "Michelangelo Buonarotti" by Louis Wiesenber, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | Poems by Raizel Wiesenber, 1943                                  |
| Box 1, Folder 12 | Miscellaneous Notes, 1939, undated                               |

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## Series 4: Artwork, 1927-1932

*(Box 1; 19 folders)*

Scope and Contents: Artwork by Wiesenberg consists of miscellaneous sketches in pencil, charcoal, and watercolor, torn from sketchbooks. Images include figure studies and landscapes.

Box 1, Folder 13      Sketchbook Cover, 1927

Box 1, Folder 14-31      Drawings, 1932, undated

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## Series 5: Printed Material, 1924-1944

*(Boxes 1-2; 7 folders)*

Scope and Contents: Printed material consists of clippings and exhibition catalogs primarily from the Society of Independent Artists.

|                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Box 1, Folder 32 | Clippings, 1931-1939, undated  |
| Box 1, Folder 33 | Exhibition Catalogs, 1924-1929 |
| Box 1, Folder 34 | Exhibition Catalogs, 1931      |
| Box 2, Folder 1  | Exhibition Catalogs, 1931      |
| Box 2, Folder 2  | Exhibition Catalogs, 1936-1937 |
| Box 2, Folder 3  | Exhibition Catalogs, 1938-1939 |
| Box 2, Folder 4  | Exhibition Catalogs, 1940-1941 |
| Box 2, Folder 5  | Exhibition Catalogs, 1944      |

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## Series 6: Photographs, 1913-1973

*(Box 2; 5 folders)*

Scope and Contents: Photographs are of Wiesenber, his family and his artwork. There is also a photograph of a portrait of Wiesenber by Gershon Benjamin.

Box 2, Folder 6            Photographs of Louis Wiesenber, 1913-1935, undated

Box 2, Folder 7            Photographs of Wiesenber and Family Members, 1920, undated

Box 2, Folder 8            Photographs of Artwork by Wiesenber, undated

Box 2, Folder 9            Slides of Artwork by Wiesenber, 1973

Box 2, Folder 10          Photograph of Portrait by Gershon Benjamin, undated

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