



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Frans Wildenhain Papers,  
circa 1890-1991, in the Archives of American Art

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2019/03/18

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>	Frans Wildenhain papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.wildfran
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1890-1991
<b>Creator:</b>	Wildenhain, Frans, 1905-1980
<b>Extent:</b>	8.2 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	The collection is in English, German, and Dutch.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of ceramicist, sculptor, and educator Frans Wildenhain measure 8.2 linear feet and date from circa 1890 to 1991. The papers document his career in Europe and the United States through biographical material, correspondence, diaries and notebooks, writings and notes, subject files, project files, printed material, three mixed media scrapbooks, artwork and sketchbooks, and photographic materials.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Elisabeth Wildenhain donated her husband's papers in 1989 and 1998.

### Related Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds an oral history interview of Frans Wildenhain conducted 1978 April 10-1979 July 28, by Robert Brown for the Archives of American Art; the Marguerite Wildenhain papers, 1930-1982; a Frans Wildenhain grant application, 1974 for the National Endowment for the Arts; Letters from Frans Wildenhain to Virginia Cartwright Katz, 1968-1979; Robert Johnson slides of works by Frans Wildenhain, circa 1978; the Kitty C. L. Fischer papers relating to Frans Wildenhain, 1940-1981; and an interview with Elisabeth (Lili) Wildenhain conducted 1995 August 22, by Robert F. Brown. Also found are the Ron Meyers papers relating to Frans Wildenhain, circa 1967-1979; the Roy Cartwright letters from Frans Wildenhain, 1966-1979; and the Gerhard Marcks letters from Frans Wildenhain, 1950-1979 on reel 2435.

### Processing Information

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

### Preferred Citation

Frans Wildenhain papers, circa 1890-1991. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center.

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## Biographical / Historical

Frans Wildenhain (1905-1980) was a German-born ceramicist, sculptor, and educator active in Rochester, New York.

Wildenhain was born in Leipzig, Germany to a family of craftsmen. He began his study of art with drawing and design. For formal training, he enrolled at the Bauhaus where he studied in the pottery studio with Gerhard Marcks, Max Krehan, and his future wife, Marguerite Friedlaender Wildenhain. The Wildenhains moved to Burg Giebichenstein, Halle, Germany to teach at the State School of Applied Art.

In 1933, due to Marguerite's Jewish ancestry, they moved to the Netherlands and set up a studio called Het Kruijke (Little Jug). Marguerite later emigrated to the United States however Frans was unable to follow. He moved to Amsterdam but was drafted into the German Army which he deserted. He followed Marguerite to the United States in 1947 after a seven year separation.

Upon his arrival in the United States, Frans drove from New York City to Geurnevillle, California where Marguerite had settled at an artist colony, Pond Farm. Their marriage did not last and Frans Wildenhain accepted a position at the School for American Craftsmen at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York. He stayed in that position for over twenty years. He co-founded a cooperative gallery called Shop One, in Rochester, New York.

In 1952, he married Marjorie McIlroy and after her death, married Elisabeth (Lili) Brockhardt.

Franz Wildenhain was a Guggenheim Fellow and exhibited his works around Europe and the United States. His pottery is included in the collections of the Rochester Institute of Technology, Smithsonian Institution, Luther College, and Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of ceramicist, sculptor, and educator Frans Wildenhain measure 8.2 linear feet and date from circa 1890 to 1991. The papers document his career in Europe and the United States through biographical material, correspondence, diaries and notebooks, writings and notes, subject files, project files, printed material, three mixed media scrapbooks, artwork and sketchbooks, and photographic materials.

The bulk of Wildenhain's correspondence is from family and friends including Walter Herzger and Marguerite Wildenhain. Twelve diaries and notebooks include general diary entries but may include notes on art, sketches, kiln logs, and designs. Of note is a diary kept by Wildenhain during his drive from New York City to Geurnevillle, California upon his arrival in the United States in 1937. Project files contain records relating to four murals completed by Wildenhain on the east coast. Three scrapbooks contain clippings, exhibition materials, and photographs concerning his teaching career at the School for American Craftsmen and exhibitions. Eleven sketchbooks date from the 1930s to 1979 and mostly contain pencil sketches. Photographs depict Wildenhain, family, his wives Marguerite, Marjorie, and Lili, homes, studios, exhibitions, and works of art by Wildenhain and others.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 10 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1930-circa 1980 (Box 1; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1895-1981 (Box 1; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 3: Diaries and Notebooks, 1930-1978 (Box 1-2; 0.7 linear feet)
- Series 4: Writings and Notes, 1940-1980 (Box 2-3; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 5: Subject Files, 1951-1985 (Box 3; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 6: Project Files, 1950-1975 (Box 3, 10; 0.7 linear feet)

- Series 7: Printed Material, 1930-1991 (Box 3-4; 0.8 linear feet)
- Series 8: Scrapbooks, 1934-1965 (Box 4; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 9: Artwork and Sketchbooks, 1930-1979 (Box 4-5, 11; 1.0 linear feet)
- Series 10: Photographs, circa 1890-1979 (Box 5-11; 3.1 linear feet)

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Types of Materials:

Diaries  
Drawings  
Interviews  
Scrapbooks  
Sketchbooks

### Names:

Herzger, Walter, 1901-1985  
School for American Crafts  
Wildenhain, Marguerite

### Occupations:

Ceramicists -- New York (State) -- Rochester  
Educators -- New York (State) -- Rochester  
Sculptors -- New York (State) -- Rochester

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1930-circa 1980

#### *0.5 Linear feet (Box 1)*

Scope and Contents: Found are address and appointment books, awards and certificates for Frans and Marjorie Wildenhain, biographical sketches, a marriage record for Frans and Marjorie, and a divorce certificate for Frans and Marguerite Wildenhain. Also found is an interview with Wildenhain conducted by Robert H. Johnson. Estate records include a posthumous inventory of works of art, and donation records to Luther College and to other institutions.

Box 1, Folder 1	Address Book, 1967-1978
Box 1, Folder 2-5	Appointment Books, 1968-1979
Box 1, Folder 6-7	Awards and Certificates, 1952-1975
Box 1, Folder 8	Biographical Sketches, 1958-1975
Box 1, Folder 9	Curriculum Vitae , 1952-1972
Box 1, Folder 10-14	Estate Records, circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 15	Financial Notes, 1973
Box 1, Folder 16	Genealogical Material, 1930-1947
Box 1, Folder 17	Identification and Naturalization Records, Frans and Marjorie Wildenhain, 1957
Box 1, Folder 18	Interview, Frans Wildenhain by Robert H. Johnson, 1975 Jan 21
Box 1, Folder 19	Marriage and Divorce Records, 1955

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1895-1981

### 0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Found is general correspondence with family and friends, many of which are in German and Dutch. Correspondents include Harold and Norelda Brennan, Walter Herzger, Carolyn Law, Hilde Kinne, Lois Moran, H. G. J. Schelling, Marguerite Wildenhain, Claire Van Vliet, and Frans Wildenhain's mother. Many letters from the 1980s are written to Lili Wildenhain, including condolence letters.

Of note are letters between Wildenhain, the Dutch Militaire Commissairs, and the United States Consulate in Rotterdam, Netherlands from the 1940s. These letters and documents describe Wildenhain's path to emigrate to the United States. These letters include character statements confirming Wildenhain was anti-fascist.

Box 1, Folder 20	General, circa 1950-circa 1970
Box 1, Folder 21	General, 1895, 1910
Box 1, Folder 22	General, 1938
Box 1, Folder 23	General, 1940-1949
Box 1, Folder 24	General, 1950-1959
Box 1, Folder 25	General, 1960-1969
Box 1, Folder 26-27	General, 1970-1979
Box 1, Folder 28	General, 1980-1981
Box 1, Folder 29	Herzger, Walter, 1953-1979
Box 1, Folder 30	Kinne, Hilde, 1963-1980
Box 1, Folder 31	Wildenhain, Marguerite, 1964-1979
Box 1, Folder 32	Frans Wildenhain's Mother, 1960-1964

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## Series 3: Diaries and Notebooks, 1930-1978

### 0.7 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Found are twelve diaries and notebooks, some are written in Dutch or German. Generally, diaries contain written daily entries while notebooks contain diary entries, general notes on art and other subjects, sketches, kiln logs, doodles, plans for gardens, language studies, and designs of jewelry.

Arrangement: Diaries and notebooks are arranged in rough chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 33	Diary, 1930
Box 2, Folder 1	Diary, Drive from New York City to Guerneville, California, 1947
Box 2, Folder 2-4	Diary, Includes Enclosures, 1951-1958
Box 2, Folder 5	Diary, Mexico, 1974-1975
Box 2, Folder 6	Notebook, 1960-1967
Box 2, Folder 7	Diary, 1969-1972
Box 2, Folder 8	Diary, 1960s
Box 2, Folder 9	Notebook, 1973-1975
Box 2, Folder 10	Notebook, 1974-1977
Box 2, Folder 11	Notebook, 1977-1978
Box 2, Folder 12	Notebook, Assembled from Loose Items, circa 1960s
Box 2, Folder 13-14	Notebook, Dismantled, 1930s-1960s

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## Series 4: Writings and Notes, 1940-1980

### 0.4 Linear feet (Box 2-3)

Scope and Contents: This series includes scattered writings by Frans Wildenhain and by others. Found are kiln logs, a handwritten and illustrated story in German, writings and notes on art, and on general subjects. Writings by others include Claire Falkenstein, Robert H. Johnson, Barbara Kaufman, Mary Caroline Richards, and Marjorie Wildenhain.

Box 2, Folder 15-16	Kiln Logs, 1969-1979
Box 2, Folder 17	Handwritten and Illustrated Story, in German, 1944
Box 2, Folder 18	By Frans Wildenhain, on Art, circa 1940-1950
Box 2, Folder 19	By Frans Wildenhain, General, 1948-1974
Box 2, Folder 20	By Others, on Frans Wildenhain, 1953-1980
Box 2, Folder 21	"Recollections Concerning Naples Mill," by Barbara Kaufman, 1977
Box 2, Folder 22	"Forming the Concept of a Wall Painting," by Claire Falkenstein, 1949
Box 2, Folder 23	Quotations, circa 1950s
Box 2, Folder 24	Labels from Exhibitions, 1980
Box 2, Folder 25	Notes, 1940s-1970s
Box 3, Folder 1-2	Notes, 1940s-1970s

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## Series 5: Subject Files, 1951-1985

### 0.2 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Subject files may contain correspondence, printed materials, and photographs concerning various galleries, institutions, and museums around the United States. Of note are files relating to the Shop One Galleries in Rochester, New York, co-founded by Wildenhain.

Box 3, Folder 3	Benson Gallery, 1972-1973
Box 3, Folder 4	Dawson Gallery, 1984-1985
Box 3, Folder 5	Esherick, Wharton, 1951-1974
Box 3, Folder 6	Fairtree Fine Crafts Institute, 1975
Box 3, Folder 7	Guggenheim Fellowships, 1953-1966
Box 3, Folder 8	Mosaic Murals, 1960s
Box 3, Folder 9	Oxford Gallery, 1973-1976
Box 3, Folder 10-11	Rochester Memorial Art Gallery, 1951-1984
Box 3, Folder 12-13	Shop One Galleries, 1955-1975

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## Series 6: Project Files, 1950-1975

*0.7 Linear feet (Box 3, 10)*

Scope and Contents: Project files contain correspondence, plans, sketches, printed material, and photographs for four murals by Frans Wildenhain.

Box 3, Folder 13-16 National Library of Medicine Mural (Bethesda, Maryland), 1961-1975

Box 3, Folder 17 Overlook Hospital Mural (Summit, New Jersey), 1966-1968

Box 3, Folder 18-19 Rochester Institute of Technology Mural, 1950-1965

Box 3, Folder 20-22 Strassenburgh Laboratories Mural (Rochester, New York), 1958-1959

Box 10, Folder 4 Oversized Photographs, National Library of Medicine Mural, 1961-1975

Box 10, Folder 5 Oversized Photographs, Strassenburgh Laboratories Mural, 1958-1959

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## Series 7: Printed Material, 1930-1991

### *0.8 Linear feet (Box 3-4)*

Scope and Contents: This series contains published books, brochures about Wildenhain and his classes, clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and periodicals.

Box 3, Folder 23	Book, The Craftsman's World, 1959
Box 3, Folder 24	Book, Uit De Werkplaatsen Der Beeldhouwers, circa 1930
Box 4, Folder 1	Book, Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar, 1919-1923, circa 1930
Box 4, Folder 2	Brochures, 1949-1963
Box 4, Folder 3-5	Clippings, 1952-1986
Box 4, Folder 6-10	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, Frans Wildenhain, 1930-1980
Box 4, Folder 11	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, Others, 1940s
Box 4, Folder 12	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, Marguerite Wildenhain, 1952-1980
Box 4, Folder 13	Periodicals, 1958, 1991

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## Series 8: Scrapbooks, 1934-1965

### *0.3 Linear feet (Box 4)*

Scope and Contents: Three scrapbooks contain clippings, exhibition materials, and photographs concerning Wildenhain's teaching career and exhibition of his pottery.

Box 4, Folder 14	Scrapbook, 1934-1953
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Box 4, Folder 15-16	Scrapbook, 1949-1961
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Box 4, Folder 17	Scrapbook, 1960-1965
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## Series 9: Artwork and Sketchbooks, 1930-1979

### 0.9 Linear feet (Box 4-5, 11)

Scope and Contents: Found are scattered sketches by Wildenhain and eleven sketchbooks, most of which are contain pencil drawings. Also found is an unsigned print and a sketchbook containing drawings of flowers which was given as a gift to Wildenhain around 1940.

Box 4, Folder 18	Sketches, circa 1940-1979
Box 4, Folder 19	Print, Unsigned, circa 1930
Box 4, Folder 20	Sketchbook (Netherlands), 1930-1938
Box 5, Folder 1	Sketchbook (Beekweg, Netherlands), circa 1930
Box 5, Folder 2	Sketchbook (Auhinga), 1962-1971
Box 5, Folder 3	Sketchbook, Pencil Sketches, 1966
Box 5, Folder 4	Sketchbook (Key West, Florida), 1960s
Box 5, Folder 5-6	Sketchbooks (Japan and Korea), 1960s
Box 5, Folder 7	Sketchbook (Puerto Rico), 1971
Box 5, Folder 8	Sketchbook (Puerto Rico and Clayton), 1976-1977
Box 5, Folder 9	Sketchbook (Florida), 1977-1978
Box 5, Folder 10	Sketchbook, Pencil and Crayon Sketches, 1979
Box 5, Folder 11	Sketchbook of Flowers, circa 1940
Oversize 11	Oversized Sketch, circa 1950

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## Series 10: Photographic Materials, circa 1890-1979

### 3.1 Linear feet (Box 5-11)

Scope and Contents: The bulk of this series consists of photographs and slides. Photographs include portraits and snapshots of Wildenhain, with family and friends, teaching and demonstrations, of homes and studios, and of works of art.

Box 5, Folder 12-14	Frans Wildenhain, Portraits and Snapshots, 1930-1979
Box 5, Folder 15	Frans Wildenhain, Teaching and Class Demonstrations, 1950s-1960s
Box 5, Folder 16-17	Frans Wildenhain, with Family and Friends, 1930s-1940s
Box 5, Folder 18	Wildenhain Family, circa 1890-1963
Box 6, Folder 1	Marguerite Wildenhain, circa 1930-1943
Box 6, Folder 2	Marjorie McIlroy Wildenhain, 1954-1967
Box 6, Folder 3	Lili Wildenhain, 1970-1984
Box 6, Folder 4	Friends, 1923-1975
Box 6, Folder 5	Photo Album, Unknown Woman, circa 1930
Box 6, Folder 6	Pond Farm (Guerneville, California), 1946
Box 6, Folder 7-8	Bushnell's Basin, House Interior and Exterior (Pittsford, New York), 1954
Box 6, Folder 9	Studio Interior, circa 1950
Box 6, Folder 10	Unidentified Building, circa 1950
Box 6, Folder 11	Wildenhain's Pottery in Netherlands, circa 1930
Box 6, Folder 12-22	Works of Art, circa 1930-1970
Box 6, Folder 23	Works of Art, Roy Cartwright, circa 1950
Box 6, Folder 24	Works of Art, Claire Falkenstein, circa 1940s
Box 6, Folder 25	Works of Art, Kitty Fischer, circa 1940s
Box 6, Folder 26	Works of Art, Otto Hagel, 1947-1950
Box 6, Folder 27	Works of Art, Stuart Harwood, circa 1950
Box 6, Folder 28	Works of Art, Virginia Cartwright Katz, circa 1950s

Box 6, Folder 29	Works of Art, Max Krehan, circa 1950s
Box 6, Folder 30	Works of Art, Gerhard Marcks, circa 1940s
Box 6, Folder 31-32	Works of Art, Lili Wildenhain, circa 1970s
Box 6, Folder 33	Works of Art, by Marjorie McIlroy Wildenhain, circa 1950s-1970s
Box 6, Folder 34	Works of Art, by Former Students, 1958-1960
Box 6, Folder 35	Contact Sheets, 1970s
Box 7, Folder 1	Slides, Bob Johnson Collection, 1973
Box 7, Folder 2-3	Slides, Lili Wildenhain, Works of Art, 1970s
Box 7, Folder 4-6	Slides, Works of Art, 1970s
Box 7, Folder 7-8	Slides, from Projector Carousel Tray 1, 1955-1979
Box 7, Folder 9-10	Slides, from Slide Case 1, 1948-1971
Box 7, Folder 11-13	Slides, from Slide Case 2, 1956-1965
Box 7, Folder 14	Slides, from Slide Case 3, 1958-1965
Box 7, Folder 15	Notes from Slide Boxes, circa 1960
Box 8, Folder 1-2	Slides, Personal Photographs, circa 1950s-1970s
Box 8, Folder 3-5	Slides, Travel, circa 1950s-1970s
Box 8, Folder 6-8	Slides, Works of Art by Wildenhain and by Others, circa 1950s-1970s
Box 9, Folder 1-10	Slides, Works of Art by Wildenhain and by Others, circa 1950s-1970s
Box 9, Folder 11-12	Negatives, circa 1950s-1970s
Box 10, Folder 1	Oversized Photographs of Wildenhain and Friends, circa 1930s-1970s
Box 10, Folder 2	Oversized Photographs of Homes and Studios, circa 1930s-1970s
Box 10, Folder 3	Oversized Photographs of Works of Art, circa 1930s-1970s
Enlarge 11	Oversized Photographs of Works of Art, 1950s
Box 10, Folder 6	Oversized Photograph Album, circa 1960

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