



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Jirayr Zorthian Papers, circa 1937-2004, in the Archives of American Art

Ricky Gomez

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Jirayr Zorthian papers
Date:	circa 1937-2004
Identifier:	AAA.zortjira
Creator:	Zorthian, Jirayr
Extent:	2 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of Jirayr Zorthian measure 2.0 linear feet and date from circa 1937 to 2004. The papers document Zorthian's career as a muralist through correspondence with family and friends; an interview, resumes, certificates, writings, and other professional activity material; clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, pamphlets on the Zorthian Day Ranch for Children, and other printed material; and photographs of Zorthian, his friends and family, and some of his artwork.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated 1994 and 1995 by Jirayr Zorthian.

Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Jirayr Zorthian conducted by Paul Karlstrom, January 28-July 9, 1997.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Ricky Gomez in 2021.

Preferred Citation

Jirayr Zorthian papers, circa 1937-2004. 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. Researchers interested in accessing audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Mural painter, painter, sculptor; Los Angeles, Calif.; b. 1911; d. 2004.

Biographical / Historical

Jirayr Zorthian (1911-2004) was a sculptor and mural painter in Los Angeles, California. Born to an Armenian family in the Ottoman Empire, he immigrated to the United States with his family following World War I. Zorthian earned a Masters of Fine Arts from Yale University and went on to study art in Italy during the 1930s. Among some of Zorthian's works are eleven murals for the Tennessee State Capitol, a mural for the United States Post Office in St. Johnsville, New York titled "Early St. Johnsville Pioneers," and "Phantasmagoria of Military Intelligence Training." In the 1960s Zorthian also established a summer camp for children on his ranch, Zorthian Day Ranch for Children.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Jirayr Zorthian measure 2.0 linear feet and date from circa 1937 to 2004. The papers document Zorthian's career as a muralist through correspondence with family and friends; an interview, resumes, certificates, writings, and other professional activity material; clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, pamphlets on the Zorthian Day Ranch for Children, and other printed material; and photographs of Zorthian, his friends and family, and some of his artwork.

Correspondence includes letters from family and friends. There are also a small number of letters from colleagues and art institutions in regards to exhibitions. Professional material includes sketches by Zorthian, an interview with Zorthian, writings and observations by Zorthian and others, and financial materials. Also included is "Creative and a Little Bit Crazy," a video recording on the life of Zorthian, and material related to additions made to the Zorthian Day Ranch for Children. Printed material consists of prints of some of Zorthian's artwork, newspaper clippings on Zorthian and the Zorthian Day Ranch for Children, exhibition announcements and catalogs. Photographic material consists of photographs of Zorthian along with friends and family at the Zorthian Day Ranch for Children, photographs of the ranch, and photographs of some of Zorthian's murals.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into four series.

- Series 1: Correspondence, 1959-2001 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 2: Professional Activity Files, 1970-2004 (0.4 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 3: Printed Material, 1959-2001 (0.5 linear feet; Boxes 1-2)
 - Series 4: Photographic Material, circa 1937-1992 (0.9 linear feet; Box 2)
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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:

Drawings
Video recordings

Occupations:

Muralists -- California -- Los Angeles
Sculptors -- California -- Los Angeles

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence, 1959-2001

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence includes letters from family and friends. There are also a small number of letters from colleagues and art institutions in regards to exhibitions.

Box 1, Folder 1	Correspondence, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Correspondence, 1959-1978
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1980-1986
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence, 1987-1989
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence, 1990-1994
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence, 1998, 2001

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Series 2: Professional Activity Files, 1970-2004

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Professional material includes sketches by Zorthian, an interview with Zorthian, writings and observations by Zorthian and others, financial materials such as receipts and an insurance policy, and resumes. Also included is "Creative and a Little Bit Crazy," a video recording on the life of Zorthian, and material related to additions made to the Zorthian Day Ranch for Children.

Box 1, Folder 7	Account Books, 1970-1982
Box 1, Folder 8	"A Select Group of Armenian Artists" Exhibition, 1978
Box 1, Folder 9	Artwork, undated
Box 1, Folder 10	"August 7, 1990" by Jirayr Zorthian, 1990 August 7
Box 1, Folder 11	Calendar, 1986
Box 1, Folder 12	Certificates, 1987-1992
Box 1, Folder 13	City of Pasadena Combined Invitational and Open Public Art Competition, 1989
Box 1, Folder 14	"Creative and a Little Bit Crazy", circa 1990 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
Box 1, Folder 15	"Impressions of J. Zorthian Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture From 1946 to 1996" by Dabney Zorthian, 1996 September
Box 1, Folder 16	Insurance Policy, 1979-1981
Box 1, Folder 17	Interview, undated
Box 1, Folder 18	"Jerry Zorthian" Music Sheet, undated
Box 1, Folder 19	"Jirayr Zorthian, 92: Eccentric Painter, Colorful Personality" by Myrna Oliver, 2004 February 1
Box 1, Folder 20	Notes, undated
Box 1, Folder 21	Receipts, 1982-1989
Box 1, Folder 22	Resumes, circa 1985, 1992
Box 1, Folder 23	"Zorthian, A Force", undated
Box 1, Folder 24	Zorthian Day Ranch For Children Addition, 1984

Box 1, Folder 25

Miscellaneous, 1976-1993

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Series 3: Printed Material, 1959-2001

0.5 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Language: Armenian, English.

Scope and Contents: Printed material consists of prints of some of Zorthian's artwork, newspaper clippings on Zorthian and the Zorthian Day Ranch for Children, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and pamphlets and applications for the Zorthian Day Ranch for Children.

Box 1, Folder 26	Artwork, undated
Box 1, Folder 27-31	Clippings, 1959-2001
Box 1, Folder 32	Exhibition Announcements, 1961-1989
Box 1, Folder 33	Exhibition Catalogs, 1986-1991
Box 1, Folder 34	Invitations, 1977-1993
Box 1, Folder 35	Magazine Clippings, 1992-1993
Box 1, Folder 36	Richard Feynman, 1988
Box 1, Folder 37-38	Zorthian Day Ranch For Children, 1959-1979
Box 1, Folder 39-40	Miscellaneous, 1940-1993
Box 2, Folder 1-2	Miscellaneous, 1978-2000

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Series 4: Photographic Material, circa 1937-1992

0.9 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Photographic material consists of photographs of Zorthian along with friends and family at the Zorthian Day Ranch for Children, photographs of the ranch, and photographs of some of Zorthian's murals.

Box 2, Folder 3-6 Artwork, undated

Box 2, Folder 7-22 Personal, circa 1937-1992

Box 2, Folder 23 Trammell Crow Company Groundbreaking Ceremony, 1984

Box 2, Folder 24-25 Zorthian Day Ranch For Children, circa 1960

Box 2, Folder 26 Miscellaneous, undated

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