



Smithsonian  
*Freer Gallery of Art and  
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

Helen D. Ling Papers

FSA.A2019.04

Kendra Jae

Funding for partial processing of the collection was supported by a grant from the Smithsonian Institution's Collections Care and Preservation Fund (CCPF).

2017 August

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Helen D. Ling Papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	FSA.A2019.04
<b>Date:</b>	1928-2008 (bulk 1945-1982)
<b>Extent:</b>	6.15 Cubic feet (consisting of 10 boxes and 1 flat box.)
<b>Language:</b>	English  Collection is primarily in English with some material in written Chinese.
<b>Summary:</b>	The Helen D. Ling Papers, dating from 1928-2008 with the bulk of material dating from 1945-1982, measure 6.15 cubic feet and include biographical material, research, writings, correspondence, printed material, and audiovisual material related to Ling's life and work as a collector and dealer of Asian art.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Donated by Ann Ling in 2017.

### Processing Information

In 2016, with funding provided by the Smithsonian Institution's Collections Care and Preservation Fund, the Archives at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives implemented the use of minimal level processing standards to increase information about and facilitate access to more of our collections.

Minimal processing included arrangement to the folder level, based on prior processing and preservation action, with retention of the pre-existing arrangement when possible. Otherwise, an order was imposed by the Processing Archivist. For this collection, minimal level processing was implemented, which included arrangement to the series, subseries and folder levels, adhering to the creator's original arrangement as much as possible. Generally, folder contents were simply verified with the original folder titles, but items within folders were not arranged further. Non-archival housing was replaced for long-term stability, but staples and other fasteners have not all been removed.

Minimal level processing and machine-readable finding aid completed by Kendra Jae, 2017 August.

### Preferred Citation

Helen D. Ling Papers. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of Ann Ling, 2017.

## Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

## Conditions Governing Use

Permission to reproduce and publish an item from the Archives is coordinated through the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery's Rights and Reproductions department. Please contact the Archives in order to initiate this process.

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## Biographical Note

Helen Dalling Ling was born in Ohio in 1901, and was an American collector, dealer, and connoisseur of Asian art and antiques.

In 1928, Ling married Tien-Gi Ling, a Chinese research chemist. The pair lived throughout South China, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Ling became interested in antiques prior to moving abroad, and eventually opened an antique shop in Shanghai in 1938 called the Green Dragon. When the Lings moved to Singapore in 1951, Helen Ling opened another shop which she operated until her death in 1982.

Ling co-founded the Southeast Asian Ceramic Society, Singapore in 1971.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of Helen Ling measure 6.15 cubic feet and date from 1928 to 2008, with the bulk of material dating between 1945-1982. The papers largely relate to Ling's personal life, research, and collections of Chinese objects. The papers include biographical material, research, writings, correspondence, printed material, and audio recordings.

Biographical material includes autobiographical accounts of Ling's life, photographs, a scrapbook, certificates of registration, and personal material such as address books, calendars, and collected business cards.

Research files relate to specific collections, Chinese art and porcelain, and individuals. Research related to individuals include news clippings, monographs, and correspondence. Photographs and publicity material for collections are included throughout the files.

Writings include publication drafts and related notes, lecture drafts and slides, and journals with material related to Ling's personal life and to collections. Journals also contain sketches and object photographs.

Printed material Includes magazines, news clippings, newsletters. Subjects represented in the printed material include the performing arts, Hong Kong, and trade in Singapore.

Correspondence consists of outgoing and incoming letters from correspondents including James Cahill, Joseph Alsop, Richard Barnhart, Mario Bussagli, Charles Blitzer, Elizabeth Hay Bechtel, Helena Chen, and Kazini of Chakhung. Correspondences that are bound together were established by the creator and have been maintained.

Audiovisual material includes audiocassettes, a VHS tape, and an aluminum disc sound recording.

## Arrangement

The Helen D. Ling papers are arranged in six series.

Series 1: Biographical Material

Series 2: Research Files

Series 3: Writings and Notes

Series 4: Correspondence

Series 5: Printed Material

Series 6: Audiovisual Material

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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:

- Art -- Collectors and collecting
- Art, Asian
- Art, Chinese
- Pottery - Asia

Types of Materials:

- Notes
- Photographs
- Slides

Geographic Names:

- Shanghai (China)
- Singapore

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1928-1982

Includes autobiographical accounts of Ling's life, address books, collected business cards, calendars, photographs, a scrapbook, and records related to Ling's business. Business records comprise of two certificates of registration for unspecified objects and one receipt from the Registrar of Business Names at the Supreme Court of Singapore.

Box 1, Folder 1	Autobiographical Writing, 1963
Box 1, Folder 2	Business Records, 1953-1954
	Personal Records, 1966-1979
Box 1, Folder 3-5	Address Books, 1979, undated
Box 1, Folder 6-7	Business Cards, undated
Box 2, Folder 1	Calendar, 1966
Box 2, Folder 2-4	Photographs, 1982, undated
Box 2, Folder 5	Scrapbook, 1928

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## Series 2: Research Files, 1945-2008

Includes photographs and publicity material for collections, research related to collections and Chinese art and porcelains, and background material on individuals. Research related to individuals include news clippings, monographs, and correspondence.

Box 3, Folder 1	Chinese Art, undated
Box 3, Folder 2-4	Chinese Porcelain, 1945, undated
	Collections, 1945-1997
Box 3, Folder 5	Chow Catalogue, undated
Box 3, Folder 6	Ho Catalogue, undated
Box 3, Folder 7	Melchior Collection, 1945-1997
Box 3, Folder 8	Shiro Porcelains, undated
Box 3, Folder 9-10	Wong Catalogue, undated
Box 3, Folder 11-12	Photographs, undated
Box 3, Folder 13	Publicity, 1979-1995, undated
Box 4, Folder 1	Publicity, 1979-1995, undated
Box 11	Photographs, undated Decorative box with images of collection objects and descriptive text.
	Individuals, 1955-2008
Box 4, Folder 2-4	Thompson, Jim, 1959-2000
Box 4, Folder 5	Andrews, Julia, 1979-1983
Box 5, Folder 1-2	Norgay, Tenzing, 1955-2008

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### Series 3: Writings and Notes, 1945-1977

Includes drafts of publications and related notes, lecture drafts and slides, journals containing material related to collections, personal journals, and sketchbooks. Titles of the lecture slides were established by the creator and have been maintained.

Box 5, Folder 3-4	Publications, 1945-1977
Box 5, Folder 5-7	Lectures, 1952-1977
Box 6, Folder 1-4	Lectures, 1952-1977
Box 6, Folder 5-7	Journals and Sketchbooks, 1949-1976
Box 7, Folder 1-4	Journals and Sketchbooks, 1949-1976

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## Series 4: Printed Material, 1969-1995

Includes magazines, news clippings, newsletters. Subjects include performing arts, Hong Kong, and trade in Singapore.

Box 8, Folder 4-5

Printed Material, 1969-1995

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## Series 5: Audiovisual Material, 1977-1991, undated

Includes audiocassettes, a VHS tapes, and aluminum disc sound recording.

Items arranged alphabetically by title.

- Box 9                      Bari Interview of Dr. T.G. Ling, Seattle, 1991  
Cassette tape.
- Box 9                      Mrs. Helen Ling Talks to the China Society of Sadar House, 1977 January 14  
Cassette tape.
- Box 9                      Untitled, undated  
VHS tape.
- Box 9                      Untitled, undated  
Aluminum disc sound recording. Text on object sleeve is in written Chinese.
- Lectures, undated
- Box 10                     HDL Early through Soochow, undated  
Slides. Images of individuals. Labeled sections include "Shanghai University,"  
"Wedding," "Soochow," and "Hangkow."
- Box 10                     HDL Singapore (Store, Thompson, Lectures), undated  
Slides. Images include individuals, buildings, works of art. Labeled sections  
include "Shanghai - Store," and "Art Exhibitions and Lectures."
- Box 10                     Shanghai, undated  
Slides. Images include individuals and newsclippings.
- Box 10                     Untitled, undated  
Slides. Images of objects and statues.
- Box 10                     Untitled, undated  
Slides. Images of objects and statues.
- Box 10                     Untitled, undated  
Slides. Images of book pages.

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