

James Martin papers, circa 1930s-2000s

Overview of the Collection

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Creator | Martin, James, 1928- |
| Title | James Martin papers |
| Dates | circa 1930s-2000s (inclusive) 1930 2009 |
| Quantity | 2.6 cubic feet (5 boxes plus 1 oversize folder) |
| Collection Number | 5260 |
| Summary | Correspondence, art exhibition and sale records, gallery announcements and catalogs, clippings, writings, and other papers related to the career James Martin, an artist based in Edmonds, Washington |
| Repository | University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Special Collections University of Washington Libraries Box 352900 Seattle, WA 98195-2900 Telephone: 206-543-1929 Fax: 206-543-1931 speccoll@uw.edu |
| Access Restrictions | Open to all users. |
| Languages | English |
| Sponsor | Funding for encoding this finding aid was partially provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. |

Biographical Note

Artist James Martin, a nationally-acclaimed painter renowned for his whimsical style, was born on April 7, 1928 in Everett, Washington, to parents Isabel Laughton and Wilfred Scott Martin. He had one older sister, Irene. When Martin was a child, his family moved to the Ballard neighborhood in Seattle, where he attended Washington Irving Elementary School, James Monroe Junior High School, and Ballard High School. During his sophomore year of high school, Martin dropped out and began work as an apprentice mechanic at William O. McKay Ford. Yet one of his teachers, Orre Nelson Nobles, recognized Martin's creative potential and convinced his parents to send him back to school. Martin returned to take art classes from Nobles, and became so devoted to the subject that he set up his own art studio in the basement of his home. However, he soon dropped out again and began work at an auto wrecking yard.

Martin eventually completed his high school degree at the YMCA in 1948, when he was twenty years old. He then enrolled at the University of Washington, where he intended to earn a degree in engineering or architecture. Neither field suited him, however, and he instead pursued classes in art and creative writing. Martin earned his Bachelor of Arts in English in 1953.

Following his graduation, Martin struggled to find work as a writer. He took a job as a patternmaker at Boeing, but did not stay in that job for long. He then began work as an art framer at Frederick & Nelson, James Martin papers, circa 1930s-2000s
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv25320>

where he began to make professional connections with art dealers and other artists. Throughout this time, Martin continued to create his own artwork, much of which was selected for exhibition in museums and galleries in Seattle. His work also caught the attention of art dealer Otto Seligman, who began to represent Martin. Martin's first show was at the Seligman Gallery in Seattle's University District in January 1958, and was well-received and garnered excellent reviews.

After Seligman's death, Martin had one last show with that gallery, which had been taken over by Francine Seders. He then exhibited at Windsor Utley's gallery before moving first to the Gordon Woodside Gallery in the 1970s and, finally, to the Foster/White Gallery in the 1980s. Martin's work, which he creates at his studio in Edmonds called the Donald Duck Ranch, continues to be widely sought-after. A book on his life and career, *James Martin: Art Rustler at the Rivoli* by Sheila Farr, was published by the University of Washington Press in 2000.

Content Description

Correspondence, art exhibition and sale records, gallery announcements and catalogs, clippings, writings, and other papers related to James Martin's career.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Creator's literary rights have been transferred to the University of Washington Libraries.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Organized into 2 accessions.

Accession No. 5260-001, James Martin papers, 1961-2001

Accession No. 5260-002, James Martin papers, 1930s-2000s

Processing Note

Processing completed in 2005 by A. Sinclair Lindsey.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Accession No. 5260-001: James Martin papers, 1961-2001

0.87 cubic feet (2 boxes plus 1 oversize folder)

Scope and Content: The bulk of the Martin papers centers around his artistic career. Included are correspondence with art galleries and financial records tracking the sales and exhibitions of his paintings. The papers also contain photographs, gallery announcements, artist catalogs, gallery

James Martin papers, circa 1930s-2000s

<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv25320>

catalogs, and newspaper clippings about his work. Also included is a small selection of writings, notes, and personal correspondence with artists such as Morris Graves and his friend and mentor, Orre Nelson Nobles.

Arrangement: Arranged in fifteen series.

Restrictions on Access: Open to all users.

Restrictions on Use: Creator's literary rights transferred to the University of Washington Libraries.

Acquisition Info: James Martin, 2001

| Container(s) | Description | Dates |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Incoming letters | | |
| <u>Box/ Folder</u> | <u>Accession</u> | |
| 1/1 | 5260-001 The Fountain Gallery of Art | 1966-1985, undated |
| 1/2 | 5260-001 Gordon Woodside Gallery <u>Scope and Content:</u> The later letters are from the Gordon Woodside/John Braseth Galleries, Seattle. | 1975-1985, undated |
| 1/3 | 5260-001 Graves, Morris | 1983-1996 |
| 1/4 | 5260-001 Mayo, Rae | 1975, undated |
| 1/5-6 | 5260-001 Nobles, Orre Nelson <u>Scope and Content:</u> Includes photographs of Orre Nelson Nobles, his family, and his South King Street, Seattle, house "Breezy Bluff," as well as stationery featuring Noble's drawings. | 1961-1967, undated |
| 1/7 | 5260-001 Otto Seligman Gallery | 1966-1968, undated |
| 1/8 | 5260-001 University of Washington, Henry Art Gallery | 1963-1986 |
| 1/9-10 | 5260-001 Miscellaneous | 1962-2000, undated |
| <u>Box/ Folder</u> | <u>Accession</u> | |
| 1/11 | 5260-001 Outgoing letters | 1967-1971 |

| Container(s) | Description | Dates |
|----------------|--|------------------------|
| | <p>Financial records <u>Scope and Content:</u> Includes inventories of the galleries, consignment receipts, sales receipts, a release, and a consignment contract.</p> | |
| Box/ Folder | Accession | |
| 1/12-14 | 5260-001 Fountain Gallery of Art | 1967-1985, undated |
| 1/15 | 5260-001 Gordon Woodside Gallery | 1972-1985, undated |
| 1/16 | 5260-001 Maxwell Galleries | 1969-1970 |
| 1/17 | 5260-001 Otto Seligman Gallery | 1964-1968, undated |
| 1/18 | 5260-001 Utley's Art Galleries | 1967-1968 |
| 1/19 | 5260-001 Miscellaneous | 1966, 1971, undated |
| | Account books | |
| Box/ Folder | Accession | |
| ½0 | 5260-001 Fountain Gallery of Art | 1966-1976 |
| ½1 | 5260-001 Gordon Woodside Gallery | 1967-1968 |
| ½2 | 5260-001 Utley's Art Galleries | undated |
| Box/ Folder | Accession | |
| 2/1 | 5260-001 Writings <u>Scope and Content:</u> Includes a watercolor on tablet paper. | undated |
| 2/2 | 5260-001 Artwork -- Christmas card by Neil Meitzler | 1962 |

| Container(s) | Description | Dates |
|------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Artist catalogs | | |
| Box/ Folder | Accession | |
| 2/3 | 5260-001 Anderson, Guy | 1965 |
| 2/3 | 5260-001 Graves, Morris <u>Scope and Content:</u> Annotated. Includes a 1992 letter from Vonnie Cowan. | [1966?], 1992 |
| 2/3 | 5260-001 Steensma, John Jay | 1997 |
| Box/ Folder | Accession | |
| 2/4 | 5260-001 Gallery catalogs | 1962-1998 |
| 2/5 | 5260-001 Photographs <u>Scope and Content:</u> One photograph of Orre Nobles; two photographs of unidentified individuals. | 1976, undated |
| 2/6 | 5260-001 Subject file -- Reynolds, Helen | undated |
| Ephemera | | |
| Box/ Folder | Accession | |
| 2/7 | 5260-001 Gallery | undated |
| 2/8 | 5260-001 Miscellaneous | undated |
| Box/ Folder | Accession | |
| 2/9 | 5260-001 Notes | undated |
| 2/10 | 5260-001 <i>James Martin: Art Rustler at the Rivoli</i> , (La Conner, Washington: Museum of Northwest Art and University of Washington Press) Farr, Sheila <u>Scope and Content:</u> Book. | 2001 |

| Container(s) | Description | Dates |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 2/11 | 5260-001 Clippings | 1967-2001 |
| Folder:Oversize | | |
| Oversize VF 73 | 5260-001 Clippings | 1995-2001 |

Accession No. 5260-002: James Martin papers, 1930s-2000s

1.73 cubic feet (3 boxes)

Scope and Content: Incoming correspondence to James Martin from gallery owners, collectors, artists, and friends; writings by Martin; clippings, brochures, and other exhibit publicity materials; and other materials related to James Martin's career.

Restrictions on Access: Open to all users.

Restrictions on Use: Creator's literary rights transferred to the University of Washington Libraries.

Acquisition Info: James Martin, 2007-04-06

| Container(s) | Description | Dates |
|---------------------|---|-------------|
| Box | Accession | |
| 1-2 | 5260-002 Correspondence | 1970s-2000s |
| 2 | 5260-002 Short stories by James Martin | 1950s |
| 2 | 5260-002 Report cards and student records (photocopies) | 1930s-1950s |
| 2 | 5260-002 Exhibit publicity | 1990s-2000s |
| 2 | 5260-002 Exhibit catalogs | 1992-2007 |
| 2 | 5260-002 Foster/White Gallery exhibition review | 2004 |
| 2 | 5260-002 Articles and clippings | 1990s-2000s |
| 2 | 5260-002 <i>Muse</i> magazine with Martin's work | 2001 |
| 2 | 5260-002 Orre Nelson Nobles biography | undated |
| 2 | 5260-002 Jay Steensma exhibit publicity | 2000 |

| Container(s) | Description | Dates |
|--------------|---|---------------|
| 2 | 5260-002 Miscellaneous | 2001, undated |
| 2 | 5260-002 Photographs and sketches | undated |
| 3 | 5260-002 Restaurant menu covers featuring artwork by Martin | undated |
| 3 | 5260-002 Clippings | 1999, 2007 |
| 3 | 5260-002 Magazine articles | 1990s-200s |
| 3 | 5260-002 Art | undated |

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Art galleries, Commercial--Oregon--Portland
 Art galleries, Commercial--Washington (State)--Seattle
 Art, American--20th century
 Artists--Washington (State)--Seattle--Archives
 Northwest school of artists

Personal Names :

Martin, James, 1928- --Archives
 Martin, James, 1928- --Exhibitions
 Nobles, Orre Nelson, 1894-1967

Corporate Names :

Fountain Gallery of Art
 Gordon Woodside Gallery (Seattle, Wash.)
 Gordon Woodside/John Braseth Galleries (Seattle, Wash.)
 Otto Seligman Gallery (Seattle, Wash.)
 Utley's Art Galleries (Seattle, Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.)
 correspondence
 exhibition catalogs
 financial records
 Photographs

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Personal Papers/Corporate Records (University of Washington)

2006 (Last modified: 4/17/2018)



<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>

About Creative Commons Licenses in Archives West:

<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/cc-zero.shtml>