

WHARTON ESHERICK AND MANSFIELD BASCOM COLLECTION

Finding Aid

Collection Overview

Call Number: 03

Repository: Wharton Esherick Museum

Extent: 4.25 Linear Feet

Language: English

Date: 1940 - 1979 (Bulk)
1863 - 2010 (Inclusive)

Creator: Esherick, Wharton; Bascom, Mansfield

Abstract: Wharton Esherick was a sculptor, artist, and craftsman. Based out of Paoli, Pennsylvania his work permeated throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Working mainly through commissions, this collection showcases his business in the later part of his life, mainly the 1940s to his death in 1970. These papers include correspondence with friends, clients, galleries, professional associations, and more. They highlight how he ran his business, and how he combined his love of art with his means of living.

The collection also houses materials from Mansfield Bascom. The son-in-law to Wharton Esherick, Mansfield "Bob" Bascom was very much a part of his life. From helping him negotiate and mediate commission agreements to researching his life and writing his biography, Bob Bascom was a very prominent figure in the Esherick family. This collection houses many materials regarding Bascom's research and writing of his biography on Wharton Esherick, including journal articles, newspaper clippings, and ephemera. In addition, the collection also houses some early papers of the Wharton Esherick Museum which he helped to establish.

Biography and History

Wharton Esherick: (1887 - 1970) - Wharton Harris Esherick was "...an internationally significant figure in the landscape of art history and American modern design". His art, mainly in wood, propelled him to be "...recognized as a leader of the Studio Furniture Movement". His work spanned throughout the early to mid-twentieth century, and it had permeated through time, establishing him as a prominent figure in his field.

Bibliography:

Wharton Esherick Museum. "About Wharton Esherick". Accessed November 29, 2022. <https://whartonesherickmuseum.org/about/>

Mansfield "Bob" Bascom: (1923 - 2020) - Mansfield "Bob" Bascom was the son-in-law to Wharton Esherick and a prominent figure in both his professional and personal life. After Wharton's life, "...Bob led efforts to raise funds for endowment, securing the future of the Museum and its collection, and our ability to promote the Museum and Esherick's legacy with the world". Bob also spent years gathering information about his father and law and published a biography of his life and work.

Bibliography:

Wharton Esherick Museum. "Remembering Mansfield "Bob" Bascom".. Accessed November 29, 2022. <https://whartonesherickmuseum.org/remembering-mansfield-bob-bascom/>

Miriam Philips: (1899 - 1997) - A trained and performing actress, Miriam Phillips wore many hats throughout her lifetime. Throughout the early to mid-20th century, one of those roles was friend, and later partner to Wharton Esherick. A partner in both life and business, Miriam often wrote to Wharton's clients on his behalf and kept his records. She was also a part of the establishment of the museum after Wharton's death.

Ruth Esherick Bascom: (1922 - 2015) - The second child of Wharton Esherick and Letty Nofer Esherick, Ruth and her husband "Bob" Bascom were an integral part in the establishment of the Wharton Esherick Museum. After its establishment, "...Ruth was elected president of the board and held that position until 1990". The workshop of Wharton Esherick became the home of Bob and Ruth in the 1970s, where the pair would continue to devote their lives to the preservation of the site, museum, and of Wharton's work.

Bibliography:

Wharton Esherick Museum. "Women's History Month Spotlight: Ruth Esherick Bascom".. Accessed November 29, 2022. <https://whartonesherickmuseum.org/womens-history-month-spotlight-ruth-esherick-bascom/>

Scope and Content

This collection consists of professional and personal papers collected by Wharton Esherick and Mansfield Bascom. The documents collected by Wharton Esherick consist mainly of professional papers including correspondence with clients, invoices, purchase orders, shipping slips, etc. The documents collected by Mansfield Bascom reflect his work surrounding the biography of Wharton Esherick. These materials include correspondence of friends and family, institutional papers regarding museum patrons and members, ephemera used for research on other important individuals and institutions, and notes taken by Bascom, himself. The collection is divided into three series - *Series I: Wharton Esherick Files*; *Series II: Bob Bascom Files*; *Series III: Bob Bascom Biographical Research*.

Series I: Wharton Esherick Files. This portion of the collection resides in the first six boxes of the collection. It is further divided into two subseries: *Wharton Esherick Correspondence and Personal Files* and *Esherick Family Personal Effects and Correspondence*. The former consists of files kept by Wharton Esherick regarding his commissions, exhibitions, memberships, etc. It is divided into six files: "Individuals", "Institutional Clients", "Galleries, Exhibitions, Museums", "Associations and Publications", "Businesses", and "Miscellaneous". The materials are divided according to their subject and are alphabetized then ordered chronologically.

Series II: Bob Bascom Files. This portion of the collection resides in the first half of Box 7 of the collection, and includes materials kept by Bob Bascom such as correspondence and paperwork related to the Wharton Esherick Museum. These materials are divided into two files: "Correspondence", and "WEM Papers". The former has folders pertaining to the writers and subjects of these letters such as Wharton Esherick, Bob and Ruth Bascom, Miriam Philips, Mary Esherick White, etc. The second file, "WEM Papers", has correspondence to museum members, patrons, etc., as well as ephemera related to the institution.

Series III: Bob Bascom Biographical Research. This portion of the collection resides in the last four boxes of the collection. It consists of research materials and notes regarding Wharton Esherick, Esherick family members and other relevant individuals and institutions. It also includes portions of Bob Bascom's manuscript. This series is divided into three subseries: *Outlines, Edits, and Drafts of Manuscript*; *Resources and Ephemera*; and *Research Notes for Biography*. The first subseries includes drafts of the manuscript, revisions and edits, and correspondence with his editor. The second subseries includes resources and ephemera from which Bob gleaned information regarding Wharton Esherick's life, work, influences, environment, etc. It includes information regarding clients, friends, and other

important individuals and institutions at the time. The third subseries includes notes taken by Bob Bascom in reference to the materials in the previous section, contacts, transcripts of interviews, etc.

Arrangement

Series I: Wharton Esherick Files

- *Subseries A: Wharton Esherick Correspondence and Professional Files*
 - File 1: Individuals
 - File 2: Institutional Clients
 - File 3: Galleries, Exhibitions, Museums
 - File 4: Associations and Publications
 - File 5: Businesses
 - File 6: Miscellaneous
- *Subseries B: Esherick Family Personal Effects and Correspondence*
 - File 1: Esherick Family Personal Effects
 - File 2: Esherick Family Correspondence

Series II: Bob Bascom Files

- *Subseries: Correspondence and Institutional Files*
 - File 1: Correspondence
 - File 2: Institutional Papers

Subseries III: Bob Bascom Biographical Research

- *Subseries A: Outlines, Edits, and Drafts of Manuscripts*
 - File 1: Outlines of Manuscript
 - File 2: Edits of Manuscript
 - File 3: Drafts of Manuscript
- *Subseries B: Resources and Ephemera*
 - File 1: Resources and Ephemera on Wharton Esherick and Works
 - File 2: Resources and Ephemera on Esherick Family
 - File 3: Resources and Ephemera on Other Relevant Individuals and Institutions
 - File 4: Miscellaneous Resources and Ephemera
- *Subseries C: Research Notes for Biography*
 - File 1: Research Notes on Wharton Esherick, Works, and Family
 - File 2: Research Notes on other Individuals, Institutions, and Topics
 - File 3: Miscellaneous Research Notes

Acquisition Information

The papers of Wharton Esherick and Mansfield Bascom were collected by these individuals and found in the Workshop in 2020. Materials were added over time by Mansfield Bascom, and other family members.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by the Archives Fellow, Erin Palmer, at the Wharton Esherick Museum. The position was funded by a grant from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage.

Related Materials

The Wharton Esherick Museum holds two previous collections: *Wharton Esherick Family Papers* (Call Number 01), and *Susan R. Hinkel Research Files on Wharton Esherick, 1989-2000 (inclusive)*, (Call Number 02). Both of which have finding aids that can be found on the Philadelphia Area Archives site, through the University of Pennsylvania.

Name and Subject Headings

Disclaimer: All subject headings are through the Library of Congress authorized headings (LCSH) and name authority files (LCNAF)

1. Esherick, Wharton (LCNAF; identifier n81079966)
 2. Bascom, Mansfield (LCNAF; identifier nr2005030490)
 3. Bascom, Ruth Esherick (LCNAF; identifier nr2005030492)
 4. Phillips, Miriam, 1899-1997 (LCNAF; identifier no2019010962)
 5. Wharton Esherick Museum (LCNAF; identifier n78007486)
 6. Pennsylvania -- Paoli (LSNAF; identifier n99008990-781)
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1. Historic house museums (LCSH; identifier sh2006006294)
 2. Furniture making (LCSH; identifier sh85052569)
 3. Wood sculpture (LCSH; identifier sh98006362)

Administrative Information

Publisher: Wharton Esherick Museum

Finding Aid Author: Finding aid prepared by Erin Palmer, Archives Fellow

Sponsor: This finding aid was created through the archives fellowship position, made possible through the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage.

Access Restrictions: Contact the Wharton Esherick Museum for information about accessing this collection.

Collection Inventory

Series I: Wharton Esherick Files

- *Subseries A: Wharton Esherick Correspondence and Professional Files*
 - File 1: Individuals
 - Folders 1-12: (A-H)

Box 2:

Series I: Wharton Esherick Files

- *Subseries A: Wharton Esherick Correspondence and Professional Files*
 - File 1: Individuals
 - Folders 13-22: (I-M)

Box 3:

Series I: Wharton Esherick Files

- *Subseries A: Wharton Esherick Correspondence and Professional Files*
 - File 1: Individuals
 - Folders 23 - 31: (N-Z)
 - File 2: Institutional Clients
 - Folder 1: (A-Z)

Box 4:

Series I: Wharton Esherick Files

- *Subseries A: Wharton Esherick Correspondence and Professional Files*
 - File 3: Galleries, Exhibitions, Museums

- Folders 1-7: (A-D)

Box 5:

Series I: Wharton Esherick Files

- *Subseries A: Wharton Esherick Correspondence and Professional Files*
 - File 3: Galleries, Exhibitions, Museums
 - Folders 8-16: (E-Z)

Box 6:

Series I: Wharton Esherick Files

- *Subseries A: Wharton Esherick Correspondence and Professional Files*
 - File 4: Associations and Publications
 - Folders 1-4: (A-Z)
 - File 5: Businesses
 - Folder 1: (A-Z)
 - File 6: Miscellaneous
 - Folder 1
- *Subseries B: Esherick Family Personal Effects and Correspondence*
 - File 1: Esherick Family Personal Effects
 - Folder 1
 - File 2: Esherick Family Correspondence
 - Folder 1

Box 7:

Series II: Bob Bascom Files

- *Subseries: Correspondence and Institutional Files*
 - File 1: Correspondence
 - Folders 1-5
 - File 2: Institutional Papers
 - Folder 1

Subseries III: Bob Bascom Biographical Research

- *Subseries A: Outlines, Edits, and Drafts of Manuscripts*
 - File 1: Outlines of Manuscript
 - Folder 1
 - File 2: Edits of Manuscript
 - Folder 1
 - File 3: Drafts of Manuscript

- Folder 1
- *Subseries B: Resources and Ephemera*
 - File 1: Resources and Ephemera on Wharton Esherick and Works
 - Folder 1
 - File 2: Resources and Ephemera on Esherick Family
 - Folder 1

Box 8:

Subseries III: Bob Bascom Biographical Research

- *Subseries B: Resources and Ephemera*
 - File 3: Resources and Ephemera on Other Relevant Individuals and Institutions
 - Folders 1-7: (A-H)

Box 9:

Subseries III: Bob Bascom Biographical Research

- *Subseries B: Resources and Ephemera*
 - File 3: Resources and Ephemera on Other Relevant Individuals and Institutions
 - Folders 8-13: (I-S)

Box 10:

Subseries III: Bob Bascom Biographical Research

- *Subseries B: Resources and Ephemera*
 - File 3: Resources and Ephemera on Other Relevant Individuals and Institutions
 - Folders 14-16: (T-Z)
 - File 4: Miscellaneous Resources and Ephemera
 - Folder 1
- *Subseries C: Research Notes for Biography*
 - File 1: Wharton Esherick Research Notes
 - Folder 1
 - File 2: Research Notes on other Individuals, Institutions, and Topics
 - Folders 1-8: (A-Z)
 - File 3: Miscellaneous Research Notes
 - Folder 1