FINDING AID FOR THE

HELEN GEE / LIMELIGHT GALLERY ARCHIVE
AG 74

Center for Creative Photography
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ  85721-0103

For further information about the archives at the Center for Creative Photography, please contact the Archivist:  phone 520-621-6273; fax 520-621-9444

DESCRIPTION
Papers, 1919-2004, of Helen Gee, (1919-2004), photographer, writer, gallery owner, and independent art consultant; and records, 1953-1961, of her New York City coffee house and photography gallery, Limelight. The papers include correspondence, “daybooks,” printed materials, legal documents, photographs, and audiotapes related to the personal and business activities of Gee, her husband the painter Yun Gee (1906-1963), and their daughter the painter Li-lan Gee (b. 1943). The records of Limelight include correspondence and office files relating largely to exhibitions at the gallery. The collection also contains records of Gee’s activities as an independent art agent after the closing of Limelight. Her exhibition and book projects later in her life are documented through manuscripts, correspondence, and ephemera.
28 linear feet

PROVENANCE
The collection was a gift to the Center from Helen Gee beginning in 1984 and concluding after her death with a final acquisition in 2005.

LANGUAGES
English, Japanese, Vietnamese

RESTRICTIONS
Some materials in the archive were previously closed to research until after the publication of Gee’s book, Limelight: A Greenwich Village Photography Gallery and Coffeehouse in the Fifties: A Memoir, published by the University of New Mexico Press in fall of 1997. Those materials are now open to research. However, documents pertaining to Gee’s estate and some documents pertaining to her students at Parsons School of Design remain closed to research.

Copyrights to Gee’s writings and photographs are held by the executors of the estate. For more information, contact the archivist.

PROCESSING NOTE
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE
Helen Gee (1919-2004) began studying art when she was fifteen. She met painter Yun Gee (1906-1963) in New York. They were married in 1942. Their daughter Li-lan Gee was born in 1943. Gee and her husband were divorced in 1947. She married Columbia University professor, Kevin Sullivan, in 1959. Their marriage ended in divorce, ca. 1961.

Helen Gee studied photography with Lisette Model and Sid Grossman. In the late 1940s and 1950s she operated a photographic retouching business in New York. She opened Limelight Gallery in Greenwich Village in May 1954. The coffee house, seating 150 patrons, supported operations of the separate 20 by 25 foot gallery space with revenues from the sale of food and drink. Limelight was one of the few New York independent exhibition spaces exclusively devoted to fine photographic prints in the 1950s. By the time Limelight closed in 1961, Gee had curated and hung sixty-one exhibitions with work by such artists as Berenice Abbott, Ansel Adams, W. Eugene Smith, Imogen Cunningham, Josef Breitenbach, Robert Frank, Paul Strand, and Minor White.

After closing the gallery, Gee remained in Greenwich Village and worked as an independent art agent. At one time she specialized in Japanese Shunga prints, but as a dealer for both United States and international clients, she dealt in a wide variety of prints, sculpture, and paintings.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE
This collection consists of two main components: personal papers documenting Helen Gee’s life, and the records of Limelight Gallery. The biographical materials include photographs and portraits of Gee and her family and friends. Included among the personal papers are photographic materials, negatives and color transparencies, created by Gee while she was a student of Lisette Model.

The family correspondence is largely between Gee and her husband and Gee and her daughter, Li-lan’s letters date from 1954 to 1981. The bulk of these letters are incoming letters from Li-lan in the 1960s and 1970s while she was living outside the United States. These letters describe her travels in Europe, Japan, and China; her early career and exhibitions as a painter; and her relationship with Japanese lithographer, Masuo Ikeda (1934-1997). While on a trip to Poland in 1967, Li-lan met Polish photographer Marek Piasecki.

Other personal correspondence includes letters from Gee's Vietnamese foster child, Nguyen Thi My Le. These letters were translated by the Foster Parents Plan and then sent to Gee. Other important correspondents include Helen Gee's friends Harry Lunn, Adelaide de Menil, Kay Spear, Jack Garmany, and her brother, Henry Wimmer.

The archive includes printed materials, 1965-1985, the bulk of which are catalogs and clippings concerning Gee, her gallery Limelight, her husband, Yun Gee, and daughter, Li-lan. Two of the four audiotapes, 1977 and 1982, document Helen Gee and Limelight Gallery. One contains an interview with photographer Roy DeCarava, and another an interview with Gee about the
painting of Yun Gee. The bulk of the periodicals, 1954 to 1983, mentions or features Gee and Limelight. Some are photocopies or tearsheets of the original articles.

These personal papers do not contain much information about Gee’s childhood, early adulthood, or her marriage to Yun Gee.

The records of Limelight, 1954 to 1961, contain correspondence between Helen Gee and artists, museums, and others; gallery advertisements; announcements; balance sheets; ledgers; mailing lists; menus; and a scrapbook. Of special note are the installation views of exhibitions and the scale model of Frank Paulin’s 1957 exhibition.

The bulk of the Limelight correspondence is from over thirty photographers including Ansel Adams, Bill Brandt, Reva Brooks, Imogen Cunningham, Eliot Porter, and Minor White, discussing upcoming exhibitions at the gallery. The general correspondence from museums and collectors details requests for print prices, inquiries about exhibitions, and other daily matters. The outgoing correspondence includes payments to artists for photographs sold, requests for exhibitions, comments on criticism of exhibitions, and other routine business matters.

Limelight financial matters are documented in the balance sheets and ledgers. Print sale records do not include the names of buyers or the actual photographs sold. Several types of printed matter are housed here: advertisements, announcements, menus, press releases and exhibition statements. These provide additional documentation on the activities of the gallery. Of special interest is a scrapbook containing contemporary newspaper clippings from New York papers about events at the gallery.

Gee’s health and legal problems during the 1980s and 1990s are documented in medical files and papers related to her lawsuit against her landlord.

**OUTLINE OF COLLECTION**

- **Series 1: Biographical materials**
- **Series 2: Correspondence**
- **Series 3: Limelight Gallery Records**
- **Series 4: Activity files**
- **Series 5: Limelight book project files, 1995-1997**
- **Series 6: Exhibitions and publications, 1977-1981**
- **Series 7: Helen Gee’s photographic materials**
- **Series 8: Miscellaneous publications**
APPENDIX: INDEX TO SELECTED LIMELIGHT GALLERY CORRESPONDENCE

INVENTORY

Series 1: Biographical materials

Miscellaneous biographical records

AG74:1/ 1 Birth certificate (facsimile), 1919
2 Childhood drawings (?), 1930s?
3 High school diploma, 1936
4 Unemployment record, 1947
5 Income tax record, 1948
6 Design for soap dispenser, 1952
7 Miscellaneous copies of biographical data, [n.d.], 1936-1937, 1939, 1947
8 Copy of Wynn Bullock inscription, n.d.
10 Documentation of marriage to Kevin Sullivan, 1959
12 “Loyalty Oath,” 1962
13 Foster Parents Plan, Inc., 1969
14 David Slivka materials, 1970-1971
15 David Slivka materials, 1972-1973
16 David Slivka materials, 1974
17 David Slivka materials, 1975
18 David Slivka materials, 1976
19 David Slivka, biographical note and photos, 1962, 1974-1975
20 Tarot card analysis, 1974-1975
21 Miscellaneous receipts, brochures, and lists, 1990s-2000s
22 Letterhead, business cards, [n.d.]
24 East Hampton photos, 1976
25 East Hampton property papers, 1980s
26 Passport photos, n.d.
27 John Simon Guggenheim Foundation grant application, 1981
29 Death certificate, Wanda Schweitzer Wimmer, 1959
30 Biographical records: Peter Wimmer Estate (copies), 1960s-1970s
31 Writings and resumes (not Helen Gee’s), [n.d.], [1982?], [1986?]
33 Helen Gee estate information, 2000 (restricted)
Family photos and portraits, ca. 1880-1975

AG74: 2 Included here are early portraits of father, Peter Wimmer, and mother, Ella Marie Tekla Ludwig; portraits of father late in life; sister, Ellen (or Ella) and brother, Henry, as children; Yun Gee, Li-lan Gee (baby, toddler, teen), Kay Spear, Evsia Model, David Slivka, Kevin Sullivan, and others; childhood photos of Helen, high school graduation photo, photos of her at Yun Gee’s studio, and of her at work at the American Photography Corporation.

Portraits of Helen Gee and Limelight, 1930s-1998

AG74: 3/ 1 Views of Limelight Gallery, 1950s
  2 Limelight postcard, 1954; dinner party, 1959
  3 Slides of scale model of Limelight installation, Frank Paulin exhibit, 1957
  4 Portraits of photo world people, 1950s and 1960s, [n.d.]
  5 Helen Gee and others at painting exhibition, [n.d.]
  6 Portraits of Helen Gee and other early negatives, [n.d.]
  7 Early photos of Helen Gee, 1930s-1940s
  8 Helen Gee, 1950s (?)
  9 Helen Gee and Beninati, [n.d.]
  10 Helen Gee on way to Limelight Opening, 1954 (photo by Arthur Lavine)
  11 Party for Helen Gee, Tokyo and opening for Masuo or Li-lan, 1969
  12 Miscellaneous photos and slides, 1969-1970
  13 Unidentified exhibition, (1980s?)
  14 Portraits of Helen Gee, 1980s and 1990s
  15 “Frank [Paulin]’s photos of Heath and me” and “Bob Shamis and me,” (1990s?)
  16 Snapshots of Helen Gee at Barnes and Noble Book-signing, Jan. 13, 1998

Travel records
This box includes a photo of Helen Gee with three men in Spain; a brochure for the Hilton Hotel in Madrid; color negatives, taken in France, primarily of architecture with some of Li-lan; some pages of Gee’s writing about experiences in Spain while she was visiting Rome, [n.d.]; diary of a trip to Japan, May 3-31, 1969; color negatives of trip to Kyoto while in Japan, 1969. Helen Gee traveled as a guest of “Tokyo Shimbun,” a newspaper that sponsored the Yasuo Kuniyoshi exhibit, in 1975. Also included are documentation about China trip, including written statement by Gee about her reasons for the China trip, 1976; itinerary, April 5-26; application for transit visas; notes to Gee from friends about her requests for slides; correspondence with US-China People’s Friendship Association, with whom she toured; two notebooks with Gee’s notes about travel in China in 1976; a few slides of people doing Tai Chi Chuan; several magazine articles on China; correspondence with Masachi Takeda about a book of lithographs; business cards; postcard exhibit announcements; and a hand written itinerary of places Gee visited while in Japan, 1986.

AG74: 4/ 1 Madrid, 1956
  2 France, n.d.
  3 Spain and Italy, n.d.
  4 Japan, 1969
  5 Kyoto, 1969
6 Japan, 1975
7 China, 1976
8 China, 1976
9 Japan, 1986


AG74: 24/1 Scanned copies of Yun’s photos, [n.d.]
2 Black & White Photo Reproductions of Paintings (1929?)
3 Schoelkopf gallery exhibit: catalogue, b&w photo, & color transparencies, 1968
4 American artist issue with article, “Yun Gee: forgotten synchromist painter,” by Diane Cochrane, Jan. 1974
6 Yun Gee catalog and press release, 1979; “Reminiscence” by Helen Gee, typescript (5 pages), [n.d.]
7 “Yun Gee, a rediscovery,” by Judith Tannenbaum, 1980
8 Typescript of Jack Tchen’s interview “An evening with Helen Gee” (2 copies), 1981
9 Yun Gee slide show script, drafts, and notes, 1982-1984
10 Audiotape: “An interview with Helen Gee about the work of Yun Gee,” by Joe Cuomo, 1984 (moved to box 15)
11 Issues of Bugaoban, covering the New York Chinatown History Project, 1984, 1987
12 Correspondence from Helen Gee regarding Yun Gee, 1997-2000
13 Yun Gee biography by Nancy Chou, 1999; description of photographs (2 pages), [n.d.]
14 Sotheby’s auction catalog, news release, and presale estimates, “Helen’s World of Yun Gee,” 1999

Li-lan materials

AG74: 5 Items include a pair of leather baby shoes of Li-lan’s that Gee calls “outdoor shoes”; an antique leather shoe (significance unknown); a pin cushion made by Li-lan (age 8); a hand-made doll, made by Helen Gee and Li-lan (age 10); a small ceramic piece made by Li-lan (age 12); review of Li-lan’s play in The Village Voice, 1955.

Oversize photographs


Scale model
AG74: 7 Scale model of the house built for Helen Gee in Springs, East Hampton, New York; R.L. Fetterman, architect, 1975

Calendars

These boxes include loose appointment calendar pages bundled together by year. Helen Gee kept names, phone numbers, calculations, and brief personal notes in these calendars, and thus they appear to function as diaries or logs. She may have kept at least two desk calendars going at once.

AG74:8 1969 (1 page only) to 1979
AG74:9 1980 to 2004

Scrapbook

AG74: 10 Scrapbook of clippings from New York area newspapers, including the *Village Voice* and *New York Times*, and from various magazines about photography, exhibits, and bohemian Greenwich Village. Also includes announcements of exhibitions at the Limelight Gallery, 1954-1958. [Note: materials are highly acidic and deteriorated. Consult archivist for permission to examine. Scanning is scheduled for these pages.]

Address Books

Fourteen envelope folders with address books, each containing phone numbers and street addresses for what appear to be friends, family members, photographers, business associates, and doctors.

AG74: 11/ 1-7 undated
AG74: 12/ 1 1963-1965
2 1965-1968
3 1983-1987
4 ca. 1986
5 ca. 1990s
6 ca. 2000
7 ca. 2004

AG74:13 Rolodex file containing addresses and phone numbers. Some of the cards contain brief notes about the individual(s) identified on the card. [n.d.]

AG74:14 Miscellaneous business cards, [n.d.]

Audiovisual materials

AG74:15 "Carlton Gallery Exhibition," 1977 [audiotape and CD]
"Casey Allen," 1979 [audiotape]
"Gee Interviews Roy DeCarava," 1979 [audiotape]

"An Interview with Helen Gee about the Work of Yun Gee," 1984 [audiotape and CD]

“New York the way it was: Greenwich Village.” Home videotape recording of television station WLIW broadcast, 1999. Composite of interviews and old footage of performances with people such as Professor Irwin Corey, Mary Travers, Ed Koch, Judy Collins, Nat Hentoff, and Helen Gee. A few minutes of footage may have been shot in Limelight. (About one hour in length).

Leonard Lopate interview with Helen Gee on radio station WNYC, ca. 1998. The interview with Gee was videotaped in the studio around the time her memoir, Limelight, was published. Good visual and sound quality.


Grove Street Pharmacy exhibition, June 6, 1998, videotape for television station WMNN. The interviewer, Michael Cox, is sitting with Helen Gee outside a café on Grove Street, New York City.

Videotape recording of interview with Helen Gee on radio station WBAI-NY, (ca. 1983?). After initial jazz interlude of Thelonious Monk, guest Helen Gee is introduced. She is speaking about an exhibition of Yun Gee’s paintings at the Vanderwoude Tannenbaum Gallery from November 8 to December 10, 1983. Gee discusses her early years and how she met Yun Gee. Discusses exhibits at the Brooklyn Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art 1932 “Murals by American Painters and Photographers.” She discusses specific paintings by Yun Gee as well as the NEH New York Chinatown Historical Project. After 24 minutes, more Monk jazz.

Series 2: Correspondence
Subseries 1: General correspondence

Correspondence, chronological, 1939-1989

AG74: 16/1 Miscellaneous letters, ephemera
2 Undated letters
3 Envelopes to Helen Wimmer from South Africa, 1942 (?)
4 Correspondence, 1930s
5 Correspondence, 1940s
6 Correspondence, 1954
7 Correspondence, 1955
8  Correspondence, 1956
9  Correspondence, 1957
10 Correspondence, 1958
11 Correspondence, 1959
12 Correspondence, 1960s
13 Correspondence, 1970-1974
14 Correspondence, 1975-1977
15 Correspondence, 1978-1979
16 Correspondence, 1980-1982
17 Correspondence, 1983-1985
18 Correspondence, 1986-1989

Correspondence, chronological, 1990-2000s

AG74: 17/
1  Correspondence, 1990
2  Correspondence, 1991
3  Correspondence, 1992-1994
4  Correspondence, 1995
5  Correspondence, 1996
6  Correspondence, 1997
7  Correspondence, 1998-1999
8  “Post-Pub letters” (after publication of *Limelight*), 1997
9  “Post-Pub letters,” 1998
10 Miscellaneous drafts of letters, ca. 1999
11 Correspondence, 2000s

Subseries 2: Selected correspondence

Correspondence, alphabetical, A-F

AG74: 18/
1  Aach, Herb and Doris
2  Adams, Ansel
3  Alvarez Bravo, Manuel
4  Auerbach, Ellen
5  Baldwin, James
6  Berko, Ferenc
7  Bezner, Lili Corbus
8  Bing, Ilse
9  Bosworth, Patricia
10 Boubat, Edouard
11 Bullock, Wynn
12 Brandt, Bill
13 Brown, Carol
14 Burckhardt, Rudy
15 Callahan, Harry
16 Center for Creative Photography
17 Coke, Van Deren
18 Cruz, Emilio
19 Cunningham, Imogen
20 deKooning, Elaine
21 de Menil, Adelaide
22 DeCarava, Roy
23 Dinken, J.M., 1974-1978
24 Dinken, J.M., 1979
25 Dinken, J.M. 1980s
26 Doty, Robert
27 Frank, Robert

**Correspondence, alphabetical, G-Li**

AG74: 19/ 1 Gagliani, Oliver
2 Garmany, John, Jan.-Sept., 1947
3 Garmany, John, Oct.-Dec., 1947
4 Garmany, John, Jan.-May, 1948
5 Garmany, John, June-Dec., 1948
6 Garmany, John, 1949
7 Garmany, John, n.d.
9 Garmany, Jack, photos
10 Garnett, William A.
11 Gilbert, Jeffrey (?)
12 Henle, Fritz
13 Heyman, Ken
14 Kamber, Gerald
15 Kaufmann, Hans
16 Kinzer, Ilona Ricardo
17 Klein, William
18 Kolodny, Frank
19 Lagace, Martha
20 Lavine, Rhoda and Arthur
21 Levinstein, Leon
22 Levinstein/Lunn Gallery
23 Lipchitz, Yulla

**Correspondence, alphabetical, Lu – W**

AG74: 20/ 1 Lunn, Harry
2 Lyons, Nathan
3 Mayer, Grace
4 Mapplethorpe, Robert
5 Menschel, Ronay, Bob, & Richard
6 Model, Evsa
7 Moholy-Nagy, Sibyl
8 Neininger, Jean
9  Newhall, Nancy
10  Norman, Dorothy
11  Osta, Emilio
12  Parks, Gordon
13  Penn, Irving
14  Peterich, Gerda
15  Piasecki, Marek
16  Porter, Eliot
17  Rivers, Jean & Urban
18  Roden, Roger
19  Rosenberg, Mynatalie
20  Schweitzer, Ernst
21  Siskind, Aaron
22  Slivka, David
23  Smith, Henry Holmes
24  Smith, W. Eugene
25  Solomon, Rosalind
26  Stein, Sally
27  Steichen, Edward
28  Steiner, Ralph
29  Strand, Paul
30  Wagstaff, Sam
31  Weiss, Sabine
32  Weston, Brett
33  White, Clarence
34  White, Minor
35  Wilhelm, Carol and Henry
36  Witkin, Lee
37  Worth, Don

Subseries 3: Cards, notes, announcements

AG74: 21 Miscellaneous personal greeting cards and notes to Helen Gee, and exhibit announcements, 1980s-2000s.

Subseries 4: Family correspondence

Correspondence from Yun Gee to Helen Gee, Nov. 1936-Dec. 1937. Includes undated manuscript; Yun’s reasons for staying in Paris; some drawings; and of note is a short poem possibly by Helen Gee to Yun Gee possibly regarding his portrait of her.

Yun Gee (1906-1963) was born in Guangdong Province in China and came to San Francisco at age fifteen. He became one of the city’s most daring avant-garde painters. Because of intense anti-Chinese sentiment, Yun moved to New York in the 1920s and later to Paris. Upon his return to New York in the 1930s, he met Helen Wimmer. This was 1934; Helen was sixteen. In 1936, Yun returned to Paris in the hope of finding a better reception for his painting but, due to
the escalation of the war, returned to the U.S. in 1939. Helen and Yun were married in 1942 and had one child, a daughter, Li-lan, born in 1943.

After Yun’s death, Helen catalogued his paintings and was committed to ensuring that Yun’s art would eventually be recognized as the work of an early and important Chinese-American modernist. She was instrumental in bringing Yun’s work to the attention of the art world with exhibitions of his art, including shows at the Robert Schoelkopf Gallery in 1968, at the William Benton Museum of Art, 1979-1980, and at Taipei Fine Arts Museum in Taiwan, in 1992.

**Correspondence from Yun Gee to Helen Gee, Nov. 1936-Dec. 1937.**

AG74: 22/  
1 Correspondence, November, 1936  
2 Correspondence, December, 1936  
3 Correspondence, January, 1937  
4 Correspondence, February, 1937  
5 Correspondence, March, 1937  
6 Correspondence, April, 1937  
7 Correspondence, May, 1937  
8 Correspondence, June, 1937  
9 Correspondence, July, 1937  
10 Correspondence, August, 1937  
11 Correspondence, September, 1937  
12 Correspondence, October, 1937  
13 Correspondence, November, 1937  
14 Correspondence, December, 1937  
15 Undated manuscripts

**Correspondence from Yun Gee to Helen Gee, Jan. 1938-Oct. 1939.**
Includes drawings and water color sketches.

AG74: 23/  
1 Correspondence, January, 1938  
2 Correspondence, February, 1938  
3 Correspondence, March, 1938  
4 Correspondence, April, 1938  
5 Correspondence, May, 1938  
6 Correspondence, June, 1938  
7 Correspondence, July, 1938  
8 Correspondence, August, 1938  
9 Correspondence, September, 1938  
10 Correspondence, October, 1938  
11 Correspondence, November, 1938  
12 Correspondence, December, 1938  
13 Note by Helen Gee, 1939  
14 Correspondence, January, 1939  
15 Correspondence, February, 1939  
16 Correspondence, March, 1939  
17 Correspondence, April, 1939
Correspondence, May, 1939
Correspondence, June, 1939
Correspondence, July, 1939
Correspondence, August, 1939
Correspondence, September, 1939
Correspondence, October, 1939

Miscellaneous correspondence from family and friends, 1942-1993.
Includes several letters from Helen Gee’s brother, Henry Wimmer, during his stay in a Veteran’s Administration hospital. Also included are letters from friends Marie Kepner and Katie Spear (nee Katherine Gudrun, married to Mel Spear); from foster daughter, Nguyen Thi My Le; from nieces, Jane and Anne Pinckard; from sister, Ellen Berland; letters and postcards from father, Peter Wimmer; letters from brother, Henry, to sister, Ellen. The bulk of this correspondence is from Li-lan to her mother.

AG74: 25/
1 Correspondence, Family & Friends, Miscellaneous, 1950-1989
2 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1990s
3 Correspondence, Katie Spear (friend), 1938 (?)-1993
4 Correspondence, Nguyen Thi My Le (foster daughter), 1969-1972
5 Miscellaneous family correspondence, 1980-1986
6 Correspondence, Ellen Berland (sister), 1949-1993
7 Correspondence, Peter Wimmer (father), n.d., 1965-1973
8 Correspondence, Peter Wimmer, n.d., 1973-1974
9 Correspondence, re: Henry Wimmer, 2000
10 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer (brother), n.d.
11 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1942-1945
12 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1977-1985
13 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1986
14 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1987
15 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1988
16 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1989
17 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1990
18 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1991
19 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1992
20 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1993
21 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1994
22 Correspondence, Henry Wimmer, 1995
23 Correspondence to Ellen and Charles Berland from Henry, [n.d.]

Li-lan Gee, miscellaneous and correspondence, undated, 1947-1955.

AG74: 26/
1 Columbus Hospital’s Baby Care Manual, 1943-1944
2 Correspondence, Helen Gee to Yun Gee (?), n.d., 1947
3 Correspondence, Helen Gee to Li-lan Gee, envelopes, 1954-1956
4 Correspondence, Helen Gee to Li-lan, 1954
5 Correspondence, Helen Gee to Li-lan, 1955
6 Artwork by Li-lan for Helen Gee, n.d., 1953
7 Envelopes, Li-lan to Helen Gee, July-Aug., 1954
8 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1954
9 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1955
10 Correspondence, from/to Li-lan, early, n.d., 1956

Letters from Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1956-1966.
AG74: 27/
1 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, July-Aug., 1956
2 Envelopes, Li-lan to Helen Gee, July-Aug., 1956
3 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, June, 1957
4 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, July, 1957
5 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, August, 1957
6 Envelopes, Li-lan to Helen Gee, June-Aug., 1961
7 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, July-Aug., 1961
8 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, June-Aug., 1962
9 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Dec. 1964-Feb. 1965
10 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1966

Letters from Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1967-1968.
AG74: 28/
1 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Jan.-Feb., 1967
2 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, March-April, 1967
3 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, May-June, 1967
4 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, July-Aug., 1967
5 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Sept.-Oct., 1967
6 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Nov.-Dec., 1967
7 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Jan., 1968
8 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, fragments, 1968
9 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Feb.-March, 1968
10 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, April, 1968
11 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, May-June, 1968

Letters from Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1968-1969.
AG74: 29/
1 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, July-Aug., 1968
2 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Sept.-Oct., 1968
3 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Nov.-Dec., 1968
4 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Jan.-March, 1969
5 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, April-May, 1969
6 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, June-July, 1969
7 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Sept.-Oct., 1969

Letters from Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1971-1983.
Greeting cards from Li-lan and Masuo, 1978-1983. Biographical information about Li-lan; news clips; exhibit announcements. Two books in Japanese from Li-lan to Helen.
AG74: 30/  1 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Feb.-April, 1971
              2 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, Aug.-Dec., 1971
              3 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1972
              4 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1973
              5 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1974
              6 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1975
              7 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1976
              8 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1977
              9 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1979
             10 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1980
           12 Correspondence, Li-lan to Helen Gee, 1981
             13 “Greeting cards from Li-lan and Masuo,” n.d., 1978-1983
             14 Canvas with an unpainted part by Li-lan (book in Japanese, inscribed by Li-
                 lan to her mother), 1976 [inscription dated 1977]
             15 My autobiography by Masuo Ikeda (book in Japanese, inscribed by the author;
                 book bears a dedication, “For my Li-Lan and my mother and my father”), 1968
                 [inscription dated 1969]

Series 3: Limelight Gallery Records

Research Files
These files appear to document the era in which Limelight Gallery came into being and include
newspaper clippings and magazine articles about the gallery and its operation as a coffeehouse,
the photographers whose work was shown there, and about Greenwich Village as a popular site
for artists, bohemians, and young people. Also included are contemporary articles from the
1980s about photographers whose work was shown at Limelight.

AG74: 31/  1 Miscellaneous information, 1953-1954
              2 Miscellaneous information, 1955
              3 Miscellaneous information, 1956
              4 Miscellaneous information, 1957
              5 Miscellaneous information, 1958
              6 Miscellaneous information, 1959
              7 Miscellaneous information, 1960
              8 Documents relating to A Photographer’s Gallery, New York, [n.d.], 1955-1957
              9 [Documents relating to] Greenwich Village, [n.d.], 1985
             9 Photo exhibitions, 1950s

Correspondence from and to Helen Gee concerning the gallery.

AG74: 32/  1 Correspondence, [n.d.]
              2 Correspondence, 1953
              3 Correspondence, 1954
              4 Correspondence, 1955 (A-H)
5 Correspondence, 1955 (M-W)
6 Correspondence, 1956
7 Correspondence, 1957
8 Correspondence, 1958
9 Correspondence, 1959
10 Correspondence, 1960
14 Advertisements, ca. 1957-1960
15 Copies of floor plans, [n.d.], 1954 [NOTE: The original floor plan blueprint is stored in an oversize flat file along with the scale model of the gallery.]

Limelight, miscellaneous

AG74: 33/ 1 Original menus, [n.d.], 1955-1959
3 Gallery statements (textual), 1954-1958
4 “Christmas Show, Dec., 1954”
5 Peacock Dinner, April 30 (?), 1958
6 Press releases (many missing), 1954-1959
7 Limelight announcements, [n.d.], 1954-1960
8 Limelight Gallery business cards, [n.d.]
9 Limelight building ownership, 1973
10 Mailing list, [n.d.]
11 Other mailing lists, [n.d.], 1957
12 “Limelight” in ASMP, May 1954
15 “Remembering Limelight,” Peter Bunnell (photocopy of typescript), [1977?]

Business Records

AG74: 34/ 1 Legal papers, 1961-1964
2 Financial reports from accountants, 1956, 1959
3 Copies of ledger pages, [n.d.], 1954-1959
4 Original ledger pages, 1955-1959
5 Financial ledger, April 1954- Oct. 1954
6 Ledgers, 1957-1960
7 “Payroll Book,” May-Oct. 1954
8 “Payroll Book,” two spiral bound books, 1955-1959

Series 4: Activity files

Subseries 1: Transcripts of interviews and teaching files
Subseries 2: Speaking, writing, and curator files

AG74: 36/
1 Writings: “Meeting Robert Frank,” [n.d.]
2 Writings: Handwritten notes and typescript fragments, [n.d.], 1945, 1984
4 Writings: [Correspondence and other documents re:] AD photo art technique (book), [n.d.], 1969-1973
7 Writings: “That’s where life is,” (about Leon Levinstein), 1982
9 Curator: West Village Art Show, 1965
10 Guest curator: Floating Foundation of Photography, 1978
11 Guest curator: Charles D. Woodhouse Exhibit, 1988
12 Speaker: Award for Lisette Model, NSSR, [n.d.]
13 Speaker: University of Connecticut, 1976
14 Speaker: Conference at International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1978
15 Speaker: International Museum of Photography, 1978
16 Speaker: Conference brochure, Society for Photographic Education, 1980
17 Speaker: Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD), 1981
18 Speaker: Society for Photographic Education, 1989
19 Speaker: “Anything Goes,” Teachers & Writers Collaborative, WYNE Radio, [1998 (?)]
21 American International Sculptor’s Symposium, NEA Grant, 1978


AG74: 37/
1 Medical records: Medicare, 1980s
2 Medical records: Invoices, 1980s
3 Medical records: Cancelled checks, 1982-1987
4 Medical records: 1985-1987
5 Medical records: 1988-1991
6 Bank records: check stubs, 1972-1973
7 Bank records: check stubs, 1975
8 Bank records: check stubs, 1975-1976
9 Bank records: check stubs, 1978-1979
10 Bank records: check stubs, 1981-1983
12 Financial records: miscellaneous bills, checks, 1990s
14 Financial records: miscellaneous invoices and checks, 1976
15 Financial records: miscellaneous invoices and checks, 1976-1978
16 Financial records: miscellaneous checks, 1976-1977
21 Eviction proceedings, 1978-1980
22 Lawsuit materials, 1980-1982
23 Lawsuit materials, 1983
24 Lawsuit materials, 1984
25 Lawsuit materials, 1985
26 Lawsuit materials, 1986
27 Lawsuit materials, 1987
28 Lawsuit materials, 1988-1989
29 Photo documentation on condition of apartment, 1986-1989
30 Diary entries, 1981-1992
31 Lawsuit: 1990-1993
32 Legal correspondence, lawsuit, 1987-1996
33 Five copies of trial transcript, 1992
34 Two copies of Exhibit materials used in trial, 1995
35 Personal account ledger used as diary, 1980s

**Subseries 4: Art dealer files, 1968-2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AG74: 38/</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Japan, 1981-1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Tokyo Shimbun, 1982”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Photos of Yun Gee and Sanyu; clipping about exhibition featuring other Chinese artists, [n.d.], 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cancelled checks, paid for art, 1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sales for Collector’s Press, [n.d.], 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Heritage Cash Trust, 1998-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>International sales: background [clippings], 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>International sales, 1971-1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>International sales, 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>International sales, 1974-1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>International sales, 1976-1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>International sales, 1978-1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>New Jersey State Museum, 1975-1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Sales: background [clipping], 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Sales, 1970-1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Sales, 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Sales, 1973-1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Sales, 1975-1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Sales, 1981-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Business correspondence, [n.d.], 1969-1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shunga Collection, [n.d.], 1972, 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>Matsumoto, [n.d.], 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>Noda, Tetsuya, [n.d.], 1970-1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yoshii, Chozo, 1973-1974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
35 Correspondence, Nantenshi Gallery, March 1972-Feb. 1973
36 Correspondence, Nantenshi Gallery, March 1973-April 1973
37 Correspondence, Nantenshi Gallery, May 1973-Dec. 1973
38 Correspondence, Nantenshi Gallery, 1974-1984
39 Ben Shahn, 1981-1982
40 Ben Shahn, 1983-1985
41 Sales, 1974-1998
42 Industrial Bank of Japan, [n.d.], 1972-1983
44 Nantenshi Gallery sales, 1974
45 Nantenshi Gallery sales, 1975-1976
47 Art Sales, [n.d.], 1989-1990
48 Bill Pinckard, Shunga art, etc., 1971-1981
49 Owens Art Gallery, 1974-1975
50 Miscellaneous color slides, [n.d.]

Subseries 5: Photographic retouching career, 1937-1968

AG74: 39/
1 Retouching: Correspondence, 1937
2 “Helen Gee, Kodachrome Retouching” (business card), [n.d.]
3 Retouching day books, 1947, 1948-1949
4 Retouching day book, 1955
5 Business ledger, Jan. 1951-Jan. 1956
6 Retouching samples (7), [n.d.]
7 Tear-sheets of advertisements retouched by Gee, [1950s-1960s]
8 Air-brush retouching, 1940s (?)
9 Book on retouching, 1968 (part 1 of 2)
10 Book on retouching, 1968 (part 2 of 2)


University of New Mexico Press

AG74: 40/
1 University of New Mexico Press: original contract, 1991
3 Correspondence with UNM Press, 1995-1996
4 Correspondence with UNM Press, 1997
5 Author’s copy-editing of manuscript, [n.d.], 1995-1998
7 Copy photos not in book
8 Copy photos of Helen Gee used in book
9 Copy photos of Limelight used in book
10 Miscellaneous copy photos used in book
11 Hardback and paperback copies of Limelight, 1997

The two drafts in paper boxes, “Draft,” box 1 and 2, appear to be early drafts of the book. These manuscripts have been heavily edited, possibly by Ellen Berland, Helen Gee’s sister since Gee’s marginalia are addressed to “E” throughout, and in one instance to “Ellen.” These appear to be the earliest drafts; they are the most edited, and the paper appears old. Another group of manuscript papers, folder 1, also appears to be an early draft. The pages are grouped as Gee grouped them. In folder 2, the writing about Yun Gee has been separated out by CCP staff, and also the writing about one of Helen Gee’s early employers, a Chinese businessman, Mr. Bough (Bao?). This appears to be material not completely utilized in *Limelight.* Separated out by staff, as well, is the material about going to France with Li-lan after winning the television contest. Folders 4-19 look to be mostly coherent drafts, though different paper and font types suggest these represent more than one draft. The manuscripts were not dated.

AG74: 41/  
1 Rough draft, loose pages  
2 Writing about Yun Gee and working for Bough  
3 Travel with Li-lan in France (television-sponsored trip)  
4 *Limelight* draft  
5 *Limelight* draft  
6 *Limelight* draft  
7 *Limelight* draft  
8 *Limelight* draft  
9 *Limelight* draft  
10 *Limelight* draft  
11 *Limelight* draft  
12 *Limelight* draft  
13 *Limelight* draft  
14 *Limelight* draft  
15 *Limelight* draft  
16 *Limelight* draft  
17 *Limelight* draft  
18 *Limelight* draft  
19 *Limelight* draft  
Draft 1—in box  
Draft 2—in box

Drafts of *Limelight,* continued.
This box contains additional drafts of the *Limelight* manuscript. Folders 20 and 21 contain drafts on which Gee has noted the years she is writing about, 1954-1959. Folders 22-24 contain drafts sequenced by chapter numbers 2-29; many of these appear to be part of a complete manuscript. Folder 25 looks like an early draft. Folder 26 contains long “fragments” of writing, i.e. miscellaneous chapters. Folder 27 gathers together loose, miscellaneous fragments of writing, some of which might have once been integrated into a larger manuscript. Display materials include dust jackets from the book and poster board advertising.
AG74:42/1 Limelight draft
2 Limelight draft
3 Limelight draft
4 Limelight draft
5 Limelight draft
6 Limelight draft
7 Limelight draft
8 Limelight display at Grove Pharmacy, New York City


AG74: 43/1 Permissions
2 Notes on photographs
3 Press materials from UNM Press
4 Miscellaneous newspaper clippings and correspondence
5 Miscellaneous correspondence
6 Business cards
7 Miscellaneous copy photos
8 Copy negatives for press prints
9 Press prints


Helen Gee’s book, *Photography of the Fifties: An American Perspective*

AG74: 44/1 Application for grant from National Endowment for the Arts to fund Photography of the Fifties exhibit, 1978
2 Correspondence regarding Photography of the Fifties exhibit, n.d., 1978
3 Correspondence, 1979
4 Correspondence regarding loans of photographs and with the Center for Creative Photography, 1979
5 Correspondence, 1980
6 Correspondence, 1981-1994
7 *Photography of the Fifties* hand-written manuscript, [undated]
8 Copies of *Photography of the Fifties* typed manuscript for book essay, [undated]
9 *Photography of the Fifties* (two copies), 1980
10 Miscellaneous press releases, reviews, and announcements
11 Posters for the exhibition, “Stieglitz and the Photo-Secesssion” (5 copies), 1978

Miscellaneous exhibitions

AG74: 45/1 [Greenwich Village Art Exhibition], 1960
2 John Simon Guggenheim grant support material, n.d.
3 Correspondence, Stieglitz and the Photo-Secesssion, 1976-78
4  Stieglitz and the Photo Secession: press release and publicity
5  Stieglitz and the Photo Secession, catalog
6  Stieglitz and the Photo Secession: press release
7  Carlton Gallery, 1977-78
8  Steichen research
9  The Gallery of World Photography
10 Center for Creative Photography, 1980-1989
11 Miscellaneous correspondence, 2000-2003

Publications, periodicals

AG74: 46

American Art and Antiques, 2:1 (Feb. 1979)
Aperture, 82 (1979)
ART News, Apr. 1978 [fragment]
Arts Magazine, 51:8 (Apr. 1977)
Asahi Camera, 1981 [fragment]
British Journal of Photography, 2 (12 Jan. 1977)
Camera, 8 (Aug. 1976)
Camera Arts, premiere issue (Nov./Dec. 1980); 1:1 (Jan./Feb. 1981); 2:2
(Mar./Apr. 1982)
Infinity, May 1954
Life, 2:2 (Feb. 1959) [fragment]
Manhattan, inc., 3:5 (May 1986)
Modern Photography, 49:9 (Sept. 1985)
New China, 4:3 (Fall 1978); 4:4 (Winter 1978)
The Photo Reporter, 6:12 (Dec. 1976); 2 (Feb. 1977); 7:6 (July-Aug.-Sept. 1977)
Photograph, 1:3 (1977)
Photographica, 14:4 (Apr. 1982)
Popular Photography, 75:1 (July 1974); 80:5 (May 1977); 84:2 (Feb. 1979)
(fragment); 87:3 (Sept. 1980); 90:9 (Sept. 1983)
Popular Photography Annual, 1980/81 [fragment]
Prime Time, 1:9 (Sept. 1980)
USA Today, 114:2482 (July 1985)

Miscellaneous research files

AG74: 47/

1  American Art & Antiques, 2:1 (January/February 1979)
3  Ansel Adams: news clippings and news releases
4  ARTS (Minnesota Society of Fine Arts), Dec. 1980
5  Aperture, No. 82, 1979
6  Art News, April 1978
7 Arts Magazine, 51:8, April 1977
8 Asahi Camera, [fragment] 1981
10 British Journal of Photography, No. 2, Jan. 12, 1979
11 Camera, No. 8, Aug., 1976
12 Camera 35, 18:2, April 1974
13 Camera Arts, premier issue, Nov./Dec., 1980; Jan./Feb., 1981; March/April, 1982
15 Cosmopolitan, 155:6, Dec. 1963
16 Family of Man
17 Infinity, May 1954, Feb. 1959 [fragment]
18 Interiors, April 1976
19 Kerouac: Photocopy of Pull My Daisy (Grove Press, 1961)
20 Kuniyoshi, catalog, 1989
21 Manhattan, inc., May 1986
22 Mickey Pallas: photographs 1945-1960, catalog, 1986
23 Modern Photography, 49:9, Sept. 1985
24 New China, Fall 1978; Winter 1978
26 A Photographer's Place [bookstore]
27 Photographica, 14:4, April 1982
30 Popular Photography Annual, 1980/81
31 Prime Time, 1:9, Sept., 1980
32 Print Collector's Newsletter
33 Rotkin Review
34 Society for Photographic Education Program
35 USA Today, 1985
36 Miscellaneous: news clippings and articles

Series 7: Helen Gee’s photographic materials

Negatives and transparencies

AG74: 48 /
1 Black & White, 2-1/4”
2 Color transparencies, Li-lan
3 Color transparencies, not of people
4 Color transparencies, people
5 Color transparencies, miscellaneous
6 [Black & white negatives by H.G.]

AG74: 49 48 Mounted color transparencies
Series 8: Miscellaneous publications

AG74: 50 Multiple copies of “The Photo Reporter” (1975-1977) and of “Helen Gee and The Limelight” (Carlton Gallery, 1977).

OVERSIZE MATERIALS IN FLAT FILE STORAGE
Scale model of Limelight Gallery as it was for the February 19 to April 2, 1957, exhibition. Installation model, 1/8 scale, including b/w photographs on gallery walls, created by Frank Paulin.

Original blue print floor plan of Limelight Gallery.

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APPENDIX: INDEX TO SELECTED LIMELIGHT GALLERY CORRESPONDENCE

Adams, Ansel, 1954-56
Álvarez Bravo, Manuel, 1954-56
*Aperture*, 1955, 1958
Auerbach, Ellen, 1955, 1957(?)

Berko, Ferenc, 1958
Bing, Ilse, ca.1956
Block, Lou, 1958
Boubat, Edouard, 1955-56
Brandt, Bill, 1954
Brooks, Reva, 1955
Bullock, Wynn, 1955
Burckhardt, Rudy, 1954-55

Callahan, Harry, 1954
Colwell, Larry, 1956
Coke, Van Deren, 1955, 1958-59
Cunningham, Imogen, 1954-56

Deschin, Jacob, 1954, 1957
Doty, Robert, *see* George Eastman House (Rochester, N.Y.)

Fogarassy, George, 1955
Frank, Robert, 1954-55, 1957

Gagliani, Oliver, 1958
Garnett, William, 1955-56
George Eastman House (Rochester, N.Y.), 1954-59

Heyman, Ken, 1957-58

Indiana University (Bloomington), 1958, 1960

Kaufman, Hans, 1958

Levinstein, Leon, 1957(?)
Lyons, Nathan, *see* George Eastman House, 1959

Mayer, Grace, 1957-58
Moholy-Nagy, Sibyl, 1955-56

Nano, Ed, 1958
Newhall, Nancy, 1954
Norman, Dorothy, 1956

Ohio University (Athens), 1956

Paul, Jacqueline, 1955-56
Peterich, Gerda, 1958
Peterich, Gerda, see also George Eastman House, 1957, 1958
Porter, Eliot, 1954-55

Schuh, Gotthard, 1954
Smith, Henry Holmes, see Indiana University, 1958, 1960
Steichen, Edward, 1955
Steichen, Edward, see also Museum of Modern Art, 1954
Strand, Paul, 1954

Tefonides, Steven, 1954-55

Weiss, Sabine, 1956
Weston, Brett, 1955-56
White, Clarence H., see Ohio University
White, Minor, 1954, 1957
White, Minor, see also Aperture, 1955, 1958
White, Minor, see also George Eastman House, 1954-57
Worth, Don, 1957

# end of finding aid #