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Finding aid for the  
Paul Strand Miscellaneous Acquisitions Collection

AG 94

Finding aid updated by Alexis Peregoy, 2018

## Paul Strand Miscellaneous Acquisitions Collection

### AG 94

#### Creator

Strand, Paul, 1890-1976

#### Abstract

Miscellaneous papers and other materials documenting the life and career of Paul Strand (1890-1976), photographer. Includes correspondence, clippings, and photographic materials from various sources. Of special interest is a clay pot purchased in Morocco by Paul Strand. Each group of materials is described separately.

#### Quantity/ Extent

2 linear feet

#### Language of Materials

English

#### Biographical/ Historical Note

Paul Strand was born in 1890 in New York City and began studying photography at age 17 under documentary-photographer Lewis H. Hine at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School. In 1908, Strand joined the Camera Club of New York and began experimenting with soft-focus lenses, gum prints and enlarged negatives. By 1912, Strand was working as a commercial photographer and continuing his photography experiments, often seeking criticism from renowned photographer Alfred Stieglitz. In 1916, Strand had his first solo exhibition at Stieglitz's "291" gallery and was also published in *Camera Work* that same year.

After serving as an x-ray technician for the U.S. Army Medical Corps in the first world war, Paul Strand collaborated with artist Charles Sheeler in the production of the film *Manhatta (New York the Magnificent)* in 1921. Strand continued on to work in the film industry as a cameraman for a medical film company; later, when the medical film company went out of business, Strand worked as a freelance motion picture cameraman. In 1923, Strand delivered the lecture "The Art Motive in Photography" at the Clarence H. White School of Photography, which was later published in the *British Journal of Photography*. In 1925, Strand was in an exhibition called *Seven Americans* at the Anderson Galleries in New York alongside artists Charles Demuth, John Marin, Marsden Hartley, Georgia O'Keeffe, Alfred Stieglitz and Arthur Dove. Beginning in 1927, Strand photographed a series of extreme close-ups of plants, driftwood and rocks. From 1932 to 1934, Strand was appointed the Chief of Photography and Cinematography for

the Department of Fine Arts at the Secretariat of Education for the Mexican government. During this period, Strand photographed and supervised the production of the government-sponsored film *Redes*, or *The Wave* in the U.S.

In 1935, Paul Strand traveled to Moscow where he was offered a position as a photographer for *USSR in Construction*. Strand ultimately declined and returned to the U.S. There, he worked with Ralph Steiner and Leo Hurwitz to produce *The Plow That Broke the Plains* for the U.S. Resettlement Administration. In 1937, Strand founded Frontier Films, a non-profit educational film company. Among the notable films that Frontier Films released are *Heart of Spain* and *Native Land*. In 1943, Strand worked as a cameraman on various film projects for U.S. government agencies. However, Strand returned to photography after a decade of working in film in 1944. Strand had a major exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York called *Photographs 1915-1945 by Paul Strand*.

Paul Strand moved to Europe in 1948, eventually settling in Orgeval, France in 1951. Throughout the mid-1950s, Strand worked on a series of portraits of prominent French intellectuals and close-ups of his garden in Orgeval. In 1959, Strand traveled to Egypt for two and a half months, where he photographed for *Living Egypt*. Strand then traveled to Morocco in 1962 to begin working on a new series of photographs that were published in *Tir a' Mhurain: Outer Hebrides*. During the 1960s, Strand photographed in Romania and Ghana, received a David Octavius Hill Medal from the Gesellschaft Deutscher Lichtbildner, and had a series of exhibitions held around the world. *Paul Strand: A Retrospective Monograph, The Years 1915-1968* was published in 1971, with an exhibition running from 1971 to 1974. In 1973, Strand was named a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, an honorary member of the American Society of Magazine Photographers, and a fellow of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Strand continued to work until he died from a long-term illness on March 31, 1976 in Orgeval, France.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The collection is comprised of nine subgroups, each collected from a separate source. Among the materials are correspondence, photographs, clippings, poems by Strand, photocopies of documents about Strand released under the Freedom of Information Act, exhibition catalogs, a clay pot, research materials, and a manuscript with notations by Hazel Strand. Each subseries is described separately below.

Subgroup One contains correspondence, 1951-1975, from Paul Strand to Jean Purcell Neining and her husband Urban. One letter has a small original Paul Strand photograph affixed. Neining assisted Strand in France as his translator in the 1950s and remained a close personal friend of Paul and Hazel Strand for many years. Also included are clippings about Strand and Ernie O'Malley, Irish activist. (13 folders).

Subgroup Two contains photocopies of correspondence, 1966-1978, from Paul and Hazel Strand to Jim and Grambs Aronson. The 73 letters have some missing pages and many are undated. The Aronsons were the Strands' landlords in New York City. (8 folders).

Subgroup Three consists of letters between Mike Weaver and the Federal Bureau of Investigation regarding Weaver's request for files on Paul Strand (1986-1987); letter from the Central Intelligence Agency to Weaver regarding his request for files on Paul Strand ((1988); photocopies of documents dated 1951-66 on Paul Strand released by the F.B.I. under the Freedom of Information-Privacy Acts. (ca. 150 pages).

Subgroup Four contains eleven original undated poems written by Paul Strand. Two are signed by Strand. The eleven typewritten pages have been photocopied for research use. (2 folders).

Subgroup Five contains five exhibition catalogs from the J. Paul Getty Museum's exhibition, *Paul Strand: People and Place*, 11 September - 25 November 1990. (1 folder).

Subgroup Six contains a ceramic vessel, bought by Paul Strand in Morocco, ca. 1960s. Later photographed and then given to Edgar Bissantz. Copies of letters from Strand to Bissantz are also included. Originals are in the possession of Bissantz. Copies of letters from Bissantz to Strand are included. Originals of these are in the Strand Collection. (1.5 linear feet (object measures 6 ¾ x 7 x 6 inches).

Subgroup Seven contains photocopies and originals of letters (2) from Paul Strand to Harry A. Goldstein, photography teacher at Tucson High School, August 4, 1946, and August 19, 1946. Also included is typed transcripts of both letters. (one folder)

Subgroup Eight contains a photocopy of poem and envelope from Paul Strand to Olga Baasch [Vrana], daughter of photographer Kurt Baasch, September 17, 1928; letter from donor and letter to donor from Olga Vrana. (one folder)

Subgroup Nine consists of photocopies of letters from research materials on Paul Strand assembled by William I. Homer and a manuscript. Material includes letters from Paul and Hazel Strand, 1974-1976. Of note is a copy of Homer's typescript manuscript for his essay "Paul Strand, Life and Work, to 1917" with comments by Hazel Strand, 1976. (one folder)

Subgroup Ten consists of legal papers relating to the last will of Paul Strand. Included are legal papers prepared by Paul Strand's law firm and include ideas for setting up a foundation in his name. (5 folders)

## Names and Subject Terms

Strand, Paul [<http://vocab.getty.edu/ulan/500003133>]

## Restrictions

### Conditions Governing Access

Access to this collection requires an appointment with the Volkerding Study Center.

### Conditions Governing Use

It is the responsibility of the user to obtain permission from the copyright owner (which could be the institution, the creator of the record, the author or his/her transferees, heirs, legates or literary executors) prior to any copyright-protected uses of the collection.

The user agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Arizona Board of Regents, the University of Arizona, Center of Creative Photography, including its officers, employees, and agents, from and against all claims made relating to copyright or other intellectual property infringement.

## Provenance

Subgroup 1: Gift of Jean Purcell Neining, 1990.

Subgroup 2: Gift of Grambs Aronson through the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1989.

Subgroup 3: Gift of Mike Weaver, 1990, 2004.

Subgroup 4: Gift of Tad Nichols, n.d.

Subgroup 5: Unknown donor and date.

Subgroup 6: Gift of Edgar Bissantz, 1992.

Subgroup 7: Gift of Terry Etherton, 1991 (Photocopies); Gift of Andrew Roth, 2009 (Originals).

Subgroup 8: Gift of David Peeler, n.d.

Subgroup 9: Gift of William I. Homer, 1998.

Subgroup 10: Gift of Naomi Rosenblum, 2019.

## Related Materials

*See also* AG 17: Paul Strand Collection

### Preferred Citation

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### Processing Information

Basic arrangement and description began in January 1990. Updated May 2006 by A. Rule.

### Container List

#### Subgroup 1

Extent: 13 folders. Gift of Jean Purcell Neining, 1990.

Box	Folder	
1	1-2	Correspondence, 1951-1975, between Strand and Jean Purcell Neining and husband, Urban
	3-4	Clippings
	5-12	Correspondence, 1951-1975, between Strand and Jean Purcell Neining and husband, Urban
	13	Clippings

#### Subgroup 2

Extent: 8 folders. Gift of Grambs Aronson through the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1989.

Box	Folder	
1	14-21	Correspondence, undated and 1966-1978 from Strand and wife Hazel to Jim and Grambs Aronson

#### Subgroup 3

Extent: 3 folders. Gift of Mike Weaver, 1990, 2004.

Box	Folder	
1	22	Documents regarding Strand obtained under Freedom of Information Act by Mike Weaver, 1990
	23	Documents regarding Strand obtained under Freedom of Information Act by Mike Weaver, 1991
	24	Photocopies of Freedom of Information files regarding Strand, 1951-1966; Mike Weaver correspondence requesting FOIA information, 1986-1988

#### Subgroup 4

Extent: 2 folders. Gift of Tad Nichols, n.d.

Box Folder

1 25-26 Poems written by Strand, original and photocopies

**Subgroup 5**

Extent: 1 folder. Unknown donor and date.

Box Folder

1 27 Getty exhibition catalogs, *Paul Strand: People and Place*, 1990

**Subgroup 6**

Extent: 1 box. Gift of Edgar Bissantz, 1992.

Box Folder

2 Ceramic vessel, circa 1960; copies of letters between Bissantz to Strand

**Subgroup 7**

Extent: 1 folder. Gift of Terry Etherton, 1991 (photocopies); Gift of Andrew Roth, 2009 (originals)

Box Folder

1 28 Correspondence between Harry A. Goldstein and Strand, 1946, originals, photocopies and transcriptions

**Subgroup 8**

Extent: 1 folder. Gift of David Peeler, n.d.

Box Folder

1 29 Photocopy of poem from Strand to Olga Baasch, 1928; 1993 letter from Olga Baasch Vrona about Strand

**Subgroup 9**

Extent: 1 folder. Gift of William I. Homer, 1998.

Box Folder

1 30 Photocopies of William I. Homer research materials on Strand, letters from the Strands, 1974-1976; manuscript for essay, with comments by Hazel Strand, 1976

**Subgroup 10**

Extent: 1 box. Gift of Naomi Rosenblum, 2019.

Box Folder

3 1 Photocopies of Paul Strand Last Will and Testament  
2 Legal documents related to distribution of Paul Strand estate

- 3 Distribution of Paul Strand Estate
- 4 Documents related to possible formation of Paul Strand Foundation
- 5 Documents related to possible formation of Paul Strand Foundation