

Center for Creative Photography

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Finding aid for the Barbara Morgan collection circa. 1927-1989 AG 95

Finding aid updated by Phoenix Smithey, 2017

Barbara Morgan Collection, 1900

AG 95

Creator

Barbara Morgan

Abstract

Papers and photographic materials relating to the life of Barbara Morgan (1900-1992), photographer. Includes correspondence, tearsheets, clippings, promotional leaflets, and reprints of writing.

Quantity/ Extent

.25 linear foot

Language of Materials

English

Biographical/ Historical Note

Barbara Morgan born July 8, 1900 is an American photographer whose artistic inclinations also included drawings, watercolors and paintings. Morgan's work was primarily focused on photographs of modern dancers such as Martha Graham and Charles Weidman. Morgan grew up on a peach ranch in Southern California and attended UCLA from 1919 to 1923, her training at that institution was based on the principle of art synthesis made famous by Arthur Wesley Dow. In 1925 Morgan officially joined the UCLA faculty, shortly after that Morgan married Willard D. Morgan a writer and photographer.

Morgan worked primarily in the Southwestern United States and in New York City. Morgan's work in the Southwest focused on photographs of herself and Willard in various locations such as the Grand Canyon and the Hopi mesas and canyons, these photographs would later go on to appear alongside of Willard's articles as illustrations. In the summer of 1930 Morgan Willard moved to New York City in response to a job offer that Willard has received. The bustle of the city was very different than Morgan's experience in the Southwest and a more abstract bent can be seen in Morgan's work after her move to the East Coast. In 1931 Morgan began to experiment with the technical and dark room aspects of photography further refining her skill with help from Willard. Morgan became an early member of the Photo League in New York.

In 1935 Morgan began to focus her work and energies on the American Modern Dance Movement. A performance by the Martha Graham Dance Company showed Morgan just how important modern dance could be socially and politically. In 1941 Morgan published her book *Martha Graham: Sixteen Dances in Photographs*. Graham and Morgan struck up a friendship that lasted more than sixty years and was mutually beneficial for both. In 1945 *La Danza Moderna Norte-Americana: Fotografias por Barbara Morgan*. The exhibition began at the Museum of Modern Art and then embarked on a South American tour.

Modern dance was not the only area of interest for Morgan and she desired to explore photography further and on a deeper level. Morgan felt that light energy was an essential component of dance and she sought to document such energy by creating gestural light drawings. Morgan also documented many children through her work in children's camps, schools, and colleges. These photos would eventually comprise her work titled *Summer's Children*. Morgan sought to document life and did not believe in restricting herself to the title of either painter or photographer. In addition to her work she was also on the faculty at Black Mountain College and lectured nationally for more than fifty years. Morgan was a co-founder of *Aperture Magazine*. Morgan passed away on August 17th 1992

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of miscellaneous materials documenting Morgan's life. The collection includes photographic portraits of Morgan, newspaper clippings, a Christie's Auction House listing, and silver gelatin prints.

Arrangement

Series 1: Miscellaneous materials documenting Morgan's life, 1927-1989 .25 linear feet (4 folders)

Names and Subject Terms

Morgan, Barbara <http://vocab.getty.edu/ulan/500023840>

Graham, Martha <http://vocab.getty.edu/ulan/500340742>

Photography

Dance

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

Collection was a gift of Morgan's son, Lloyd Morgan in 1989

Related Materials

There are related materials in collections AG9, AG10, AG20, AG31, AG38, AG45, AG48, AG77 and AG206.

Preferred Citation

Barbara Morgan collection, circa 1927-1989, AG95. Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

Processing Information

The collection was processed circa 1989 by the Center's Archivists. The finding aid was updated by Phoenix Smithey in 2017.

Container List

Series 1: Barbara Morgan collection, 1927-1989

Quantity is four folders of records relating to Barbara Morgan and her work.

Box Folder

1 1-4 Papers and photographic materials relating to the life of Barbara Morgan