

Center for Creative Photography

The University of Arizona

1030 N. Olive Rd.

P.O. Box 210103

Tucson, AZ 85721

Phone: 520-621-6273

Fax: 520-621-9444

Email: [info@ccp.arizona.edu](mailto:info@ccp.arizona.edu)

URL: <http://creativephotography.org>

Finding aid for the  
Ralph Steiner Miscellaneous Collection, 1899-1986  
AG 142

Finding aid updated by Paige Hilman, 2018

## Ralph Steiner Miscellaneous Collection, 1899-1986

### AG 142

#### Creator

This is an artificial collection, compiled to document the career of Steiner from a variety of perspectives.

#### Abstract

Miscellaneous papers and camera equipment documenting the career of Ralph Steiner, 1899-1986, photographer and filmmaker.

#### Quantity/ Extent

1 linear foot

#### Language of Materials

English

#### Biographical/ Historical Note

Ralph Steiner studied photography at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire and at the Clarence White School from 1921 to 1922. With White's assistance, Steiner got a job making photogravure plates at the Manhattan Photogravure Company, where Alfred Stieglitz's *Camera Work* was printed. After about a year, he quit to become a freelance advertising and magazine photographer.

Steiner began to make films in the late 1920s. In 1936 he worked with Paul Strand on *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, Pare Lorentz's documentary film about the dust bowl storms. Two years later, Steiner and Willard Van Dyke founded American Documentary Films, Inc., and collaborated on *The City*, a critically acclaimed film about New York. Steiner moved to Hollywood in the 1940s but returned to New York in 1948. There he continued to freelance both as a photographer and cameraman and occasionally taught students. He relocated to Vermont in 1970, where he remained until his death.

[\[http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/artists/1429/ralph-steiner-american-1899-1986/\]](http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/artists/1429/ralph-steiner-american-1899-1986/)

#### Scope and Content Note

The collection was acquired from various sources. The collection consists of five subgroups.

Subgroup one contains various production records, 1968-1992, of *The Joy of Seeing*, including correspondences and project summaries.

Subgroup two contains books from Steiner's library, many with annotations by Steiner or the author.

Subgroup three contains 25 letters, 1972-1977, with Louis P. Savenelli and camera equipment given to Savenelli by Steiner.

Subgroup four contains one postcard, 1974, from Steiner to B.A. King regarding a visit from Lee Witkin.

Subgroup five contains photocopies of 21 letters, 1980-1985, between Del Zogg and Steiner regarding various exhibitions and presentations.

### **Arrangement**

Subgroup 1: Records for *The Joy of Seeing*, 1968-1992, 1 box

Subgroup 2: Books, 1 box

Subgroup 3: Correspondence with Louis P. Savenelli, 1972-1977, 1 box

Subgroup 4: Correspondence with B.A. King, 1974, 1 postcard

Subgroup 5: Correspondence with Del Zogg, 1980-1985, 1 box

### **Names and Subject Terms**

Steiner, Ralph [<http://vocab.getty.edu/ulan/500022058>]

### **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**

Each group of materials in this collection was acquired from a different source. This is an artificial collection, compiled to document the career of Steiner from a variety of

perspectives. Subgroups were gifts of Barbara Van Dyke, A. Olson, Louis P. Savenelli, Tony King of Black Ice Publishers, and Del Zogg, respectively.

### Related Materials

Ralph Steiner Collection, AG68

### Preferred Citation

Steiner, Ralph Misc. Collection, 1899-1986. AG142. Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

### Processing Information

Initial inventory compiled in August 1992.

Finding aid updated by Paige Hilman in January 2018.

### Container List

#### Series 1: Subgroup One, 1968-1992

Note: Gift of Barbara Van Dyke, 1992

Box	Item	
1	1	Production records for <i>The Joy of Seeing</i> , 1968
	2	Notebooks, letters, and postcards kept by Barbara Van Dyke who worked with Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke on the film <i>The Joy of Seeing</i> .
	3	Prospectus/summary of project and itemized costs kept by BVD
	4	Correspondence with Nicholas Dorsky and Ralph Steiner.

#### Series 2: Subgroup Two

Note: Gift of A. Olson, 1999

Box	Item	
2	1	Books from Ralph Steiner's library, many with notes by Steiner or annotated by the author. List is with the books.

#### Series 3: Subgroup Three, 1972-1977

Note: Twenty five letters from Ralph Steiner to Louis P. Savenelli, circa 1972-1977, Gift of Louis P. Savenelli, 2007

Box	Item	
3	1	Annotated list of letters by Savenelli (2 pages)

- 2 Letter from Savenelli to CCP describing his friendship with Steiner (2 pgs)
- 3 Ralph Steiner exhibition announcement, 1975
- 4 Camera and lenses belonging to Steiner and give to Savenelli, including  
EXA 35mm single lens relex camera, Ihagee, Dresden, Germany,  
with f 2.9 50mm  
Meritar lens  
Leather case  
Meyer-Optik Gorlitz Trioplan 1:2.8 100mm lens, serial number  
13336660

**Series 4: Subgroup Four, 1974**

Note: Gift of Tony King, Black Ice Publishers, 2009

- | Box | Item |   |
|-----|------|---|
| 1   | 1    | One postcard from Ralph Steiner to B.A. King, January 9, 1974, talking about a visit from Lee Witkin, Witkin Gallery. |

**Series 5: Subgroup Five, 1980-1985**

Note: 21 letters between Ralph Steiner and Del Zogg, Gift of Del Zogg, 2015

- | Box | Item |  |
|-----|------|--|
| 1   | 1    | "Highlights from the Ralph Steiner Presentation," undated [photocopy]                                    |
|     | 2    | Witkin Gallery press release, "Ralph Steiner's Photographs," October 9 – November 9, 1974 [photocopy]    |
|     | 3    | Proposal by Ralph Steiner for a Center for Creative Photography in NYC, undated [photocopy]              |
|     | 4    | Writing about making new photographs look vintage, 1976 [photocopy]                                      |
|     | 5    | 'A New Approach to Photography Exhibitions: "The Photography in Search of Himself"', undated [photocopy] |
|     | 6    | Abstracts for IMP/GEH symposium on the art history of photography, 1975 [photocopy]                      |