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Finding aid for the
Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Papers,
1941-2007, bulk 1980-1999

AG 193

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AG 193

Creator

Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection

Abstract

Papers, 1941-2007, of photograph collectors Marjorie (1922-1998) and Leonard (1918-2007) Vernon, the bulk of which relates to the Vernon's collecting activities, 1980 – 1999. Included in the collection is correspondence, hand written notes, clippings, publications, book jackets, an audio cassette, and several photographs. A small portion of the collection relates to photographer Max Yavno. The Vernons were executors of the Max Yavno Estate and handled reproductions of Yavno photographs after the photographer's death in 1985.

Quantity/ Extent

2.5 linear feet

Language of Materials

English

Biographical Note

Marjorie and Leonard Vernon began collecting fine art photography in 1977 after Leonard saw Edward Weston's *Rock, Pt. Lobos* in the Weston Gallery in Carmel, California. Leonard Vernon, an industrial developer, builder and contractor, and his wife Marjorie became influential collectors in the Southern California photography community. By the time of Leonard's death in October 2007, the collection had grown to over 4,000 images by over 700 artists. Marjorie died of cancer in November 1998.

Both the Vernons were Brooklyn, New York, natives and knew each other as teenagers. Leonard graduated from City College of New York with a degree in engineering and served as a weatherman in the Air Force in World War II. While on a business trip in 1955, Leonard looked up Marjorie, a widow living in Southern California, and six months later they were married and making Los Angeles their home. They had three children, Carol, Barry, and Robert.

Scope and Content Note

The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Papers document, at a cursory level, the Vernons' interactions with artists and dealers of fine art photography while assembling their collection of fine art photographs. There is minimal specific information about the collection itself or how it was acquired by the Vernons except what information can be found in a handful of published articles about the couple and in dealer meeting notes. Also included is a small amount of material on photographer Max Yavno. The collection is divided into two series: The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection, 1979-2007, bulk 1980-1999, and Max Yavno Materials, 1941 -1992, bulk 1980s – 1990s.

The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection series includes correspondence, handwritten notes about artwork, exhibition related materials, and publications about the Vernons and their collection. The majority of the correspondence in this series, which dates 1979-2007 with the bulk from 1980-1999, is from dealers and artists inviting the Vernons to gallery openings, updating them on new acquisitions available for purchase, or sending them their latest catalogues. None of these catalogues are present in the collection. Occasionally a letter will have a hand-written notation about a particular photograph mentioned in the letter or will mention an attached receipt for a purchase. As with the catalogues, none of these receipts are in the collection. Taken as a whole, the correspondence provides no real specific information about the Vernon's photograph collection or how it was acquired but it does show how the Vernons were courted by numerous artists, galleries, and dealers who viewed the couple as serious collectors. There is minimal personal correspondence in the collection.

The Dealer Meeting Notes [folder title supplied by processing archivist] were found in manila envelopes with Post-it notes labeled "MSV/LV Memories/Correspond. For CCP" and "Vernon/Dealer Mtg. Corre./Etc. for CCP" when acquired by the Center for Creative Photography. These notes consist of yellow lined paper generally with the name of a dealer at the top and a date and lists of artists, image titles or descriptions, and a dollar amount. Some pages have notations, sometimes the words "yes" or "no" and, on occasion, "hold" or "bought." The folders are loosely in date order.

In 1999 the Santa Barbara Museum of Art curated an exhibition drawn from the Vernon's collection titled "An Eclectic Focus." Materials include correspondence surrounding the show's opening events, announcements and press releases, published materials about the show, and book jackets from a catalogue published to accompany the show. There is no information in the collection indicating what works were chosen for the show or exhibited. The show traveled to the Ansel Adams Center in San Francisco, California, in October – December 1999 and material from this venue includes publicity and a photocopy of the visitor comments. A second show, "Masterworks from the Vernon Collection" traveled to Germany and was at the SK/Stiftung Kultur in 2000. Material from this exhibition includes press releases, announcements, and photographs of the installation.

The Max Yavno Materials, 1941 -1992 bulk 1980s – 1990s, includes correspondence, prints lists, book project information, and material related to several Yavno shows including a Max Yavno and Aaron Siskind show at the Photographer’s Gallery in London, England in 1982. Included in this material are several photographs of Yavno at the show’s opening. There is also an audio recording titled “Art Talks: Leonard Vernon on Max Yavno” from 1989.

Arrangement

Series 1: The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection

Series 2: Max Yavno Materials

Names and Subject Terms

Vernon, Leonard. -2007

Vernon, Marjorie, -1998

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

Gift of the Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection, 2008.

Related Materials

Max Yavno Papers, AG 135

Preferred Citation

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Processing Information

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Finding aid updated by Meghan Jordan in June 2016.

Container List

Box Folder

Series 1: The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection, 1979-2007, bulk 1980s-1999

Subseries 1: Correspondence

1 1-23 Correspondence, 1979-2007, bulk 1980-1999

Subseries 2: Dealer Notes

1 24-25 Dealer Meeting Notes, 1980s-1990s

Subseries 3: Exhibitions

2 1-2 "An Eclectic Focus" exhibition, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1991 June 26 – September 5

3 1-2 "An Eclectic Focus" exhibition, publicity and book jackets, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1991 June 26 – September 5

2 3 "An Eclectic Focus" exhibition, Ansel Adams Gallery, San Francisco, Calif., 1999 October – December

2 4 "Masterworks from the Vernon Collection," exhibition, SK/Stiftun Kultur, Germany, 2000

Subseries 4: Publications/Articles

2 5 *Art + Auction*, 1992 April

2 6 *LA Artcore 11th Annual Awards Banquet* program, 1999

Subseries 5: Miscellaneous Materials

2 7 Clipping File

2 8 Filing Markers/Tabs

2 9 SW with Leonard and Marjorie watching a ballgame [photograph]

Series 2: Max Yavno Materials, 1941 -1992, bulk 1980s – 1990s

2 9 Correspondence, print lists, book project, 1941, 1977-1994

2 10 Exhibitions and gallery shows, clippings, 1948, 1976-1992

2 11 Max Yavno and Aaron Siskind Show, Photographers Gallery, London, England, 1982-[1983]

2 12 Sound recording: "Art Talks: Leonard Vernon on Max Yavno," undated [audio cassette]