Finding aid for the
William Mortensen Miscellaneous Acquisitions Collection
William Mortensen Miscellaneous Acquisitions Collection
AG 191

Description
Materials related to the life and career of William Mortensen (1897-1965), photographer, author, and teacher.

Quantity: 4.5 linear feet

Scope and Content Note
Collection consists of materials collected from separate sources at different times. The collection is divided into eight series: Research on Mortensen negatives; The Command to Look; Publications by Mortensen; Publications about Mortensen; Auction records for Mortensen photographs and books; Larry Lytle research materials; R. H. Cochrane, Jr. materials; Richard Bennett+ notebook.

Series One, Research on Mortensen Negatives, contains correspondence and research materials collected by CCP archivist Amy Rule. Includes an inventory of the 55 gelatin silver nitrate film negatives at the International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House. These negatives evidently were acquired from the Louis Walton Sipley American Museum of Photography.


Series Three, Publications by Mortensen, consists of The Female Figure by William Mortensen (Newport Beach, CA: Jay Curtis Publications, 1954) [photocopy]; How to Pose the Model by Mortensen and George Dunham (3rd edition) [copy of dust jacket]; The Texture Screen by William Mortensen (Newport Beach, CA: Jay Curtis Publications, 1954) [photocopy]. Miscellaneous articles including photocopies of articles in the Los Angeles Times Home Magazine (May – July 1941); “The Hermits of Baltimore,” Camera magazine 78:2 (February 1953), 24-31, 88.


Series Six, Research Materials Collected by Larry Lytle, Mortensen Biographer, 1990s, contains copies of public records related to Mortensen’s life such as the record of his birth in 1897, Los
Angeles County census records, passport application, World War I draft registration card, Orange County voters registration file, Salt Lake City directory pages, and other official public records; Bibliography complied by Lytle in 1997; Lytle photographs of Mortensen addresses in Laguna Beach; Mortensen School brochures (copies); Lytle comments on the contents of the Gray Silva Collection at CCP; Chronology of Mortensen’s addresses, 1932-1966; Transcription of telephone interview between Lytle and Robert Balcomb, 1998; 16th Annual Festival of Arts and Pageant of the Masters, Laguna Beach (copy; Cecil B. DeMille’s Production The King of Kings by Jeanie Macpherson, [undated] (copy; The Mode in Costume by R. Turner Wilcox, 1948; with inscription, “4-15-50 Bill Mortensen with sincere regards – Kelly L. Taulbee” [pages possibly marked by Mortensen; Four copy negatives of Mortensen images, [undated]; Photocopies of magazine articles, 1940s-1950s; photocopics of Mortensen photographs; Hood Medal, 1949 (copy).

Miscellaneous research notes from Larry Lytle.

Biographical materials related to Mortensen and Dunham, including photographs of grave stones, marriage certificate of Myrdith and William Mortensen, death certificates of Myrdith and Dunham, notes and copies of pages from city directories.

Art sources for Mortensen subjects. Copies of illustrations in books and magazines showing possible sources for Mortensen’s subjects and compositions.

“The Command to Look: The Story of William Mortensen, Parts 1, 2, 3,” by Larry Lytle. Printouts from the online journal The Scream (8 May 2002), extensively illustrated with scans of Mortensen’s photographs.


George Dunham: Miscellaneous copies of official records, notes, and emails related to the education of Dunham including proof that he attended Harvard University, 1921-22.

Dunham: Documents from Dunham’s career at Pomona College including his writings in student publications, 1917-1921.

Dunham: Copies of newspaper clippings, emails and other documentation of Dunham’s life in Laguna Beach, 1927-65.

Laguna Beach research materials, research materials related to Mortensen’s career in Laguna Beach. Copies of original materials in the Laguna Beach Historical Society. Supplied with the assistance of LBHS staff member Jane Janz. Also includes copies of articles by Mortensen, George Dunham, Paul Outerbridge, and others writing in the South Coast News and other publications about Mortensen’s studio and the Mortensen School of Photography in Laguna Beach, the Laguna artists’ scene, the Festival of the Arts and Pageant of the Masters, the Festival Photographic Contest, and publication of Mortensen’s photographs and books. Of special note
are clippings related to the 1956 claim by the U.S. Postal Service authorities that Mortensen’s book *The Female Figure* was obscene.

Miscellaneous Larry Lytle research materials, including copies of *The Camera* magazine (1944-1946), newspaper article about Lytle lecture in Laguna Beach (2006), and various research notes.


Series Eight, Richard Bennett Notebook, undated, contains a note book created by Richard Bennett, student of William Mortensen, undated (ca. 147 pages); includes extensive notes on Mortensen’s photographic techniques and materials involved in the pigment, bromoil, and texturescreen processes. The notebook was deaccessioned from the Salt Lake City Art Center Library, 2005 and donated to the Center.

Related Materials
The Center has several archival collections containing materials documenting the life and career of William Mortensen. Researchers are invited to consult the:
William Mortensen Archive (AG147)
William Mortensen & George Dunham Collection (AG43)

In addition, CCP has collections acquired from a number of Mortensen’s students:
Robert Balcomb (AG180)
Anson Beman (AG185)
Ralph D. Hosenpud (AG227)
Ben Maxey (AG112)
Grey Silva (AG134)

CCP also has collections related to other photographers from the Pictorialist tradition:
Paul Anderson (AG40)
Aubrey Bodine (AG139)
Adolf Fassbender (AG168)

Restrictions
[text]

Copyright
Copyright for unpublished materials resides with the author and must be researched before research copies can be made.
Provenance
   Series 6, Gift of Larry Lytle, 2010.
   Series 8, Gift of James Swenson, 2005.

Administrative Information
   Amy Rule did the preliminary organization in May 2003 and prepared a draft finding aid in August 2009.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container List</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Box</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td><strong>Series Two</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Series Three</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monographs</td>
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<td>3/1</td>
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<td><strong>Series Four</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Series Six</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research materials collected by Larry Lytle, Mortensen biographer, 1990s</td>
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</table>
6/1  Miscellaneous research notes from Larry Lytle
6/2  Biographical materials related to Mortensen, wife Myrdith, and George Dunham
6/3  Art sources for Mortensen subjects
6/4  “The Command to Look: The Story of William Mortensen, Parts 1, 2, 3,” by Larry Lytle, May 8 2002
6/5  “The Illustrative Photographs of William Mortensen Used in Camera Craft Publications,” by Larry Lytle, 1997
6/6  George Dunham: Miscellaneous copies of official records, notes, and emails related to the education of Dunham
6/7  Dunham: Documents from Dunham’s career at Pomona College, 1917-1921.
6/8  Dunham: Copies of newspaper clippings, emails and other documentation of Dunham’s life in Laguna Beach, 1927-65.
6/9  Research materials related to Mortensen’s career in Laguna Beach
2  6/10  Mortensen Biographical Materials (copies of official public records)
6/11  Bibliography complied by Lytle in 1997
6/12  Lytle photographs of Mortensen addresses in Laguna Beach
6/13  Mortensen School brochures (copies)
6/14  Lytle comments on the contents of the Gray Silva Collection at CCP
6/15  Chronology of Mortensen’s addresses, 1932-1966
6/16  Transcription of telephone interview between Lytle and Robert Balcomb, 1998
6/17  16th Annual Festival of Arts and Pageant of the Masters, Laguna Beach (copy)
6/18  Cecil B. DeMille’s Production The King of Kings by Jeanie Macpherson, [undated] (copy)
6/19  Photography magazine articles, 1940’s-1950’s (copies)
6/20  Mortensen photographs (photocopies)
6/21  Hood Medal chronology sheet, 1949
      Negatives
            Four copy negatives of Mortensen images, undated
      Monograph
3  6/22  Miscellaneous Larry Lytle research materials
6/23  The Camera magazine (1944-1946) 4 copies
6/24  Original research by Larry Lytle, 1996-1997
Miscellaneous materials documenting the photographic career of Larry Lytle.

Calendars
- Destination, 2008
- Sandwich Exotica, 2006
- Fun & Games 2005
- Tintypes, 2004
- Inventions of the Twentieth Century, 2000 [2 c.]
- Magic & Illusion, 1999
- The Best Parts, 1998

Exhibition announcements

Booklets of Lytle photographs
- Vanitas, momento mori and other meditations on death
- The Strange and Amazing Case of Pygmalion and Galatea

5 Series 7 R. H. Cochrane, Jr. Materials
Negatives by Robert H. Cochrane, Jr., a Mortensen Metal Chrome Student, 1939

3 Series 8 Richard Bennett notebook, undated