
Finding aid prepared by Katherine Ets-Hokin.
San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library
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URL: http://www.sfpl.org/sfhistory
Title: San Francisco Arts Commission Neighborhood Arts Program Records

Date (inclusive): 1970-2003

Date (bulk): 1970-1990

Identifier/Call Number: SFH 453

Creator: San Francisco (Calif.). Art Commission

Physical Description: Three cartons and one pamphlet box. (3.25 Cubic Feet)

Contributing Institution: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

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Abstract: The San Francisco Neighborhood Arts Program (NAP) was established and funded by the Arts Commission in July 1967. The NAP shifted the focus of the arts community to neighborhood community centers that reflected the cultural identities of the communities who lived there. It was the first community program of its kind employing hundreds of local artists working in a variety of artistic disciplines, offering workshops, performances and other arts services in cultural centers and community settings.

Physical Location: The collection is stored onsite.

Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English with some Chinese.

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is available for use during San Francisco History Center hours.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], San Francisco Arts Commission Neighborhood Arts Program Records (SFH 453), San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Provenance

Donated by Anne Trickey in 2016 for the San Francisco Art Commission.

Related Materials

Researches are encouraged to view SFP 30, San Francisco Arts Festival Photographs and Records, 1948-1985 (bulk 1967-1985) and to search the SFPL catalog.

Administrative History

The San Francisco Neighborhood Arts Program (NAP) was established and funded by the Arts Commission in July 1967 with substantial support from Commission president Harold Zellerbach. The NAP shifted the focus of the arts community to neighborhood community centers that reflected the cultural identities of the communities who lived there. It was the first community program of its kind and its influence quickly inspired many cities throughout the country to follow the same model.

The program employed hundreds of local artists working in a variety of artistic disciplines, offering workshops, performances and other arts services in cultural centers and community settings. Popular performers like the Pickle Family Circus, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, and Intersection for the Arts were cultivated in the Neighborhood Arts Program which also attracted talented artists like Bill Irwin, Marga Gomez, Roberto Vargas, Danny Glover and Peter Coyote.

In 1973 the city announced plans to spend five million dollars in federal revenue-sharing to develop a Performing Arts Center, today’s Davies Symphony Hall. Community members were outraged that their funding was being allocated for an arts center designed for only a wealthy few. The activist group Community Coalition For the Arts won a commitment from the city to spend two and a half million dollars in revenue-sharing over five years to purchase and develop community cultural centers.

In 1974 NAP and the San Francisco Arts Commission acquired federal funding through the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA) and were able to hire 123 CETA artist positions.

By 1977 SF Arts Commission had acquired four buildings and converted them to neighborhood arts centers: Bayview Opera House, Mission Cultural Center, Western Addition Cultural Center, and the South of Market Cultural Center (now SOMArts). They also leased facilities in Chinatown, North Beach and Bernal Heights.
When Davies Symphony Hall opened in 1980 tensions flared. Artists and community members were angry that neighborhood art programs were being defunded while so much money was being spent on the new symphony building. On November 25, 1980 a fire destroyed the commission’s headquarters at 165 Grove Street damaging prints, drawings and paintings and destroying many offices and records. The building was eventually razed and the commission was relocated to new offices.

The effects of proposition 13 lowering property taxes undercut funding for schools and the arts, and in 1981 the federal government stopped funding the CETA arts program and the NAP lost seventy-five percent of its staff.

Sometime between September and November of 1991 the Neighborhood Arts Program changed its name to Community Arts and Education to reflect its broader focus and it continues to support the arts in San Francisco.

Scope and Content

The collection contains files relating to the Neighborhood Arts Program and the Chinese Cultural Center. Materials include correspondence, files on community centers, flyers, booklets, events planning, materials relating to NAP, clippings, directories, photographs and photographic slides.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged in 3 series: Series 1: Neighboorhood Arts Program Records, Series 2: Cultural Centers, Series 3: Photos. Series 2 has one subseries. Subseries 2.1: Chinatown Neighborhood Arts Program.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Neighborhood Arts Program (San Francisco, Calif.)
Community centers.
San Francisco (Calif.). Art Commission
San Francisco Arts Commission

box 1-2

Series 1 Neighborhood Arts Program Subject Files 1970-2003

Scope and Content

This series consists of general files relating to the Neighborhood Arts Program. Materials include correspondence, media documentation, community centers, flyers, booklets clippings, directories and events. Subjects include: Bayview Opera House, California Consortium for Expansion of the Arts, Center for Africa and African American Arts and Culture, Chinatown Community Arts Project, Ethnic Dance Festival, Forums, Blues Festival, Making Waves, Mission Cultural Center, Murals, Chinatown, and South of Market Cultural Center.

Series 2 Cultural Centers

Scope and Contents

Mission Cultural Center, Chinatown, and South of Market Cultural Center are found in Box 1 and 2.

box 3

Subseries 2.1 Chinatown Cultural Center 1980-1993

Scope and Content

This Subseries contains materials from to the Chinese Cultural Center. Subjects include art classes, dance classes, festivals, fairs, exhibitions, and calligraphy. Ephemera includes flyers, event application forms, newspaper clippings, brochures and some correspondence. Languages include English and Chinese.
Series 3 Photos

Scope and Content
This series consists of photos, negatives and slides of Neighborhood Arts Program performances and events. Subjects include: Bernal Heights Fiesta on the Hill, CAE Projects, Ethnic Dance Festival, Precita Eyes Mural Arts Festival, Ministry to Nursing Homes Photos, Senior Citizen Craft Programs, Sunset Neighborhood Coalition, and Visual Art Show Depicting Flowers.