San Francisco Museum of Art Office of the Director Records 1935-1958

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Descriptive Summary

Title: San Francisco Museum of Art Office of the Director Records 1935-1958
Dates: 1935-1958
Collection Number: ARCH.ADM.001
Creator/Collector: San Francisco Museum of Art
Extent: 57.1 linear feet (137 boxes,. 5 oversize box, 1 tube)
Repository: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
San Francisco, California 94103

Abstract: The San Francisco Museum of Art Office of the Director Records contain administrative records from the Museum generated between 1935 and 1958, corresponding with the tenure of its first director, Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley. The SFMA opened in 1935 in the War Memorial Veteran’s Building; these records document the beginnings and growth of the Museum, development of innovative educational programs, museum publicity, and the relationship of the director with other museum directors around the world. Records are divided by calendar year, and folders are arranged alphabetically within each year.

Language of Material: English

Access
Collection is available for use. Some materials are restricted for confidentiality or condition.

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Preferred Citation

Scope and Content of Collection
The early administrative records from the office of the director of the San Francisco Museum of Art, spanning the years 1935-1958, document the tenure of the institution’s first director, Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley. Particularly in the early years of the Museum all administrative records were generated by or circulated through the office of the director; departmental divisions within the Museum’s organization were not distinguished until the 1960s and later. The records from the office of the director from 1935-1958 include all administrative correspondence and records related to museum operations and maintenance, as well as educational programming, publicity, events, and development/fundraising.

Not included in the administrative records from the office of the director are exhibition records, the majority of the permanent collection records, photographs, and records related to the operation of the Board of Trustees and Women’s Board.

Though not a separate collection, Morley’s professional records are contained within the Museum’s administrative records, most of which are distinguished by folder titles beginning with “Morley, Dr. GM.” Morley files include chronological correspondence, articles, invitations, letters of recommendation and introduction (with separate sets of recommendations for Guggenheim Fellowship awards), lectures, and committees.

The most extensively documented years of the collection are from 1937 through 1942, and the least documented years include the Museum’s first two – 1935 and 1936 – and the post-World War II years 1946 through 1949, when Morley was largely absent from the Museum while working for UNESCO.

Each year’s worth of records were processed separately (except for 1935 and 1936 which were processed together) and have annotated folder level descriptions as well as folder content categorical designations in the annual Indexes (see Appendix A). In addition, occurrences of records from individual museums, galleries, art dealers, arts organizations, clubs, and institutions are recorded in indexes which show the name of the organization/person and in which years’ records they appear (see Appendices B, C, and D).

Indexing Terms
Art appreciation—Study and teaching—California—San Francisco
Art appreciation—Study and teaching (Elementary)—Activity programs—California—San Francisco
Art, Modern—20th century—Exhibitions
Art museum curators
Art museum directors
Art museums and community—California—San Francisco
Art museums—Educational aspects
Art museums—Employees
Art museums—Employees
Art museums—Exhibitions
Art museums—Public relations—California—San Francisco
Art rental and lending services—California—San Francisco
Museum buildings—California—San Francisco
Museum libraries—California—San Francisco
Women museum directors
Morley, Grace, 1900-[1985]
California School of Fine Arts (San Francisco, Calif.)
San Francisco Art Association
San Francisco Museum of Art
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
San Francisco Museum of Art—Archives
San Francisco Museum of Art—History—Sources
San Francisco Museum of Art—Records and correspondence
San Francisco Museum of Art—Board of Trustees
War Memorial Veterans Building (San Francisco, Calif.)
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